The Messages of The Bible

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The Messages of the Bible

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XI. The Messages of Paul.
XII. The Messages of the Apostles.

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BY

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Woolsey Professor of Biblical Literature in Yale University

AND

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Professor of Biblical History and Literature in Brown University

THE MESSAGES OF THE EARLIER PROPHETS

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THE MESSAGES OF THE EARLIER PROPHETS

ARRANGED IN THE ORDER OF TIME, ANALYZED, AND FREELY RENDERED IN PARAPHRASE,

BY

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THIRD EDITION

NEW YORK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1899

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PREFACE

The statement has become almost proverbial that the Bible is the "plain man's book," a book that can be understood and used by those who lay no claim to scholarship. True as this may be of the Gospels and the historical books of the Bible, its application is not universal. There are not a few passages, and even whole sections, of the Bible, which, because of obscurities of style and arrangement, convey no intelligible idea to many readers.

For these reasons, no part of the Scriptures suffers more neglect and misapprehension than the prophetic writings. Their choicest thought lies deep, and rewards none but the patient and careful student. One who merely reads in course a certain number of chapters each day is largely cut off from a true appreciation of the part that the prophet played in the progress of revelation. Even the eager student, if he lack the clue to the prophetic labyrinth, is forced to wander aimlessly and without result through its mazes.

To seek to introduce to this fair and fruitful domain of revelation the multitudes of zealous Bible students who lack the time or the opportunity for gaining entrance

for themselves, is the privilege and duty of the Christian scholar. His task is not a difficult one. By rearranging the prophetic writings in a truly chronological order, and by indicating their interpretation through a paraphrase, he can enable the general student to grasp their meaning and their force. He can at the same time clear up many incidental obscurities, can indicate the definite results of active and sober scholarship in the past, and can arouse a real enthusiasm for the detailed mastery of these sublime products of inspired religious thought.

The present volume is offered to the public as an attempt to meet these needs of the Bible reader. The limitations inherent in such work have not been overlooked. It is clearly impossible to reproduce the beauty and vigor of the language of the prophets, or to represent the wealth of poetic and oratorical embellishment which is so characteristic a feature of it. A paraphrase must chiefly aim at clearness. Whoever has once caught the real spirit of prophetic thought will not fail to study it in detail, and thus will acquire for himself an appreciation of its remarkable quality.

Brackets are used to indicate passages which are generally regarded as later additions to the original text.

FRANK KNIGHT SANDERS.
CHARLES FOSTER KENT.

September, 1898.

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

THE BEGINNINGS OF HEBREW PROPHECY

With Amos and Hosea, in the middle of the eighth century before Christ, began that notable succession of religious thinkers whose utterances have been given permanent form in the prophetic books of the Old Testament. As we know from their writings, they were men of remarkable breadth, insight, and power. While their greatest service to the world of their day, or of ours, was in the sphere of constructive religious thought, they were interested in the practical problems of human life, and touched it at many points. Their conviction that righteousness and sincerity were the fundamental elements of true life made them unsparing critics of social wrongs, idolatry, formalism, and worldliness, preachers of faith in God and love to man, and statesmanlike advisers on questions of public policy. Their chief distinction was their modest boldness. They spoke in the name of God, and claimed to give expression to his will. They looked at life from the standpoint of the Divine, approving or denouncing its varied phases according to their harmony with the ideal revealed to them.

These men were called by their contemporaries "prophets," or occasionally "seers." Another favorite term was "men of God." "Prophet," the most frequently recurring term, literally meant "the speaker" (Exod. 7 : 1), and suggested that the one to whom it was applied was commissioned to proclaim the will of God. The prophets themselves claimed that they spoke with the sanction and support of Jehovah. In the consciousness of this support they dared "to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin."

The number of prophets whom we know through their published utterances is strangely small. Between the middle of the eighth century and the Babylonian exile (586 B.C.) only eight or nine can be enumerated. Even these appeared in two groups separated by nearly a century of silence. The student of to-day is therefore tempted to consider the prophet an isolated phenomenon, called into existence by God to serve as his mouthpiece at a time of especial need, when his people required reassurance, guidance, comfort, or criticism.

To the men of that era, however, the prophet was a familiar sight. Those to whom the title was freely given were numbered by scores and hundreds. They formed an important class in Hebrew society, to which the people at large paid constant deference. So marked was this respect that many adopted prophecy as a profession

who were morally and spiritually incapable of apprehending and of interpreting the will of God, and were unwilling to meet the social consequences of proclaiming his austere commands. For such as these the real prophets had a profound contempt; with them they held many a bitter dispute; from them they not infrequently met with the most exasperating opposition, because the people of Israel, not unlike other peoples, often followed the advice of the prophets who echoed the popular desire. The honor thus wrongly bestowed is a proof, however, that the prophetic order was recognized as a permanent national institution. For centuries before the days of Amos, prophets had been ardent champions of popular rights, zealous advocates of devotion to God, and champions of patriotism and other true ideals. Even Amos and Hosea were merely unusual types of their class, with ideas that were startling. They appealed to the popular conscience; they were not revolutionists, but reformers. Their right to speak in God's name was not seriously questioned, for this was in the line of a prophet's duty.

We can trace the history of the prophetic order as an organization back to the times of Samuel. There are indications that, before his day, there were individuals here and there who were regarded as having the power to determine the will of God. They were called "seers" (1 Sam. 9 : 9), and held in high respect by the people,

but their isolation prevented their wider effectiveness. Samuel was a sort of link between the old and the new. He was himself a "seer," but his practical mind created a new sphere of influence. Apparently enlisting those who were ready to give themselves to loyal service for God, he organized a permanent order of religious patriots, whose first duty was to kindle a sense of loyalty among the people. These men may well be described as enthusiasts, and they used methods of arousing themselves to religious fervor that to-day seem crude and even objectionable. Yet it was a decided advance in religious history when such enthusiasts submitted to leadership. Their devotion and energy gradually found expression in worthier ways.

We cannot definitely trace the history of the order between the days of Samuel and the time of Elijah, although we know that it had an unbroken record. The biblical historians of these centuries direct our attention to a few of Samuel's successors, such as Gad, Nathan, Ahijah, and Jehu. These leaders were, no doubt, the ones who dignified and developed the function of the prophet as an active member of society. The patriotism of these men led them to become the annalists and historians of the nation; their farsightedness and moral earnestness made them the valued advisers of kings and people; their honesty led them to expose that which was

wrong or unworthy; their constant thought of God in his relations to mankind developed a simple but profound philosophy of history, to illustrate which they studied their past experiences as a nation. Since they represented the Almighty they were not afraid to defy any human power. Repeatedly they rebuked the king himself for forgetting his duty or his right.

The growing influence of the order became in itself a danger, for it attracted many recruits who were of little value. It is probable that voluntary association as well as such a selection by a recognized prophet as that of Elisha by Elijah, increased the membership of the prophetic bands. These bands formed little communities, sometimes living together, having many interests in common. Ahab had no difficulty in summoning before him four hundred at one time (1 Kings 22). Their support came, in part, from the gifts of those who sought their advice. Inevitably there were members of the order whose motives were mercenary. Micah's sarcastic reference (Micah 3 : 5) to the prophets, who "bite with their teeth and cry, Peace; and whoso putteth not into their mouths, they even sanctify war against him," is paralleled by the evident lack of confidence of Jehoshaphat in the four hundred prophets who unhesitatingly predicted the victory which Ahab desired (1 Kings 22 : 7).

In the days of Ahab and Jezebel a test was applied to the prophetic organization which at once made prominent a true representative of its noblest aims, and emphasized the difference between the spurious prophet, who was merely a member of the order, and the real prophet to whom Jehovah revealed himself. The zeal of Queen Jezebel for her ancestral faith caused her to determine to introduce the worship of Baal throughout all Israel, as well as in Samaria, the capital, where a magnificent temple had been erected for her use. To the king and to many of the people this mattered little. To the true prophets it meant treason to Jehovah, the God of Israel. In order to overawe all opposition, Jezebel began a persistent persecution of the prophets and their sympathizers, which seemed to be successful (1 Kings 19 : 14). Those who remained loyal to Jehovah were forced to hide or keep their opinions a secret. This supreme crisis produced the man to meet it. The prophet Elijah, after announcing by the prediction of the drought and famine that Jehovah was displeased with his people, dared to challenge the representatives of Baalism to a test, and to demand from the people absolute loyalty to Jehovah. He was only in part successful ; but his policy of determined resistance to Baalism, and all that it fostered, was continued by his disciple and servant, the prophet Elisha, to whose zeal and influence was

due the ultimate expulsion of the hated worship and its votaries from Israel. Through their influence the nation fully acknowledged Jehovah as its God. With that declaration of loyalty there was renewed a consciousness that he had chosen them to be his peculiar people, with a unique destiny which they could not define, but in which they firmly believed.

The next half-century seemed to justify this spirit of faithfulness. It was a time of prosperity and peace in both kingdoms under able rulers. Each nation grew strong, secure, and wealthy. The ensuing commercial development revolutionized social conditions. The ruling classes used their power unscrupulously to acquire riches. Greed, violence, injustice, fraud, became so common that they excited little remark. Even prophets and priests were found who shared in this carnival of selfish greed. In the face of it all was a complacency which tried the souls of the truly upright. The people were proud of their history, scrupulous about their religious duties, and confident that Jehovah their God was loading them with blessings, and would bestow yet greater ones. Their theory of religion made it a system of observances, the hearty fulfilment of which would ensure the protection and favor of God. That he would measure the quality as well as the quantity of such worship they hardly seemed to realize.

Under these conditions, the advance of the conquering nation of Assyria produced another momentous crisis in Israel's religious life. This nation seemed invincible, its intentions clear. Would Jehovah protect his people? If he failed to do so, was it not because the gods of the invader were stronger? Was it worth while to be loyal to him? Upon a true answer hung the faith of the Hebrews. None but a prophet could give it. At this juncture, Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah saved Israel's faith by broadening it. They showed that the nation was guilty in the sight of God, that he was going to make use of the Assyrian world-power as an instrument of scourging, but that his ultimate intention was to purify the nation, and use it for his gracious purpose.

By this clear-cut assertion of the supremacy of the moral element in the character of God the prophets revolutionized religious thinking. They had to restate the true conception of Jehovah, his purpose and methods, and to reinterpret human experiences in their light. An era of constructive thought ensued which is hardly to be surpassed in the world's history. To explain it as the mere achievement of logical and earnest minds is impossible. The only satisfactory explanation is that God was leading and teaching mankind through his chosen messengers.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPHETIC WRITINGS

One of the first facts impressed upon the student of prophetic literature is that the prophetic books in the Bible are arranged on quite another principle than that of historical order. Whether the ruling motive was that of size or relative excellence is not clear. At all events, the prophet Isaiah was the third prophet in order, not the first; Jeremiah was the seventh, not the second, while Amos was probably the first to utter a public sermon. Since the prophetic writings can best be understood and appreciated in connection with the events to which they allude, and out of which they sprang, it is necessary for the student of biblical history and literature to rearrange them in the order of time. It will be noticed, also, that the earlier prophetic books belong in two distinct groups, three-fourths of a century apart,—the first group of four, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah, belonging to the latter half of the eighth century; the second group of four, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Nahum, and Habakkuk, covering the half-century after 627 B. C.

No less obvious is the fact that these prophetic books contain a number of separate utterances arranged in an order which is frequently not chronological. Some interpreters think that the Book of Amos contains not less

than ten or eleven distinct sermons, and the Book of Micah almost as many. So far as it is possible to determine the principle in accordance with which these passages are arranged in the Old Testament, it seems to be topical. The prophets of the sixth century, such as Jeremiah or Ezekiel, were in the habit of dating their oracles, so that it is comparatively easy to arrange them in the order of utterance. The earlier prophets almost never indicated the date of a sermon, so that the determination of this fact is less certain. Such a rearrangement of prophetic addresses into their probable historical order is essential before the student of prophecy can enter completely into the heart of his subject. Without it no one can intelligently grasp the changing phases of Isaiah's preaching during the forty years or more of his active life, nor the increasing hopelessness of the utterances of Jeremiah. Such a rearrangement is adopted in this volume, in order that a clear conception of the development of prophecy may be gained.

When the student calls to mind the long period of years during which we know that Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Micah were active, and notes the compact report of the prophetic addresses of all those years, he is forced to conclude that the writings to which we have access are but a representative digest of the actual utterances. The words were not probably taken down on the spot as

spoken, but reproduced from memory either by the prophet himself or by a faithful disciple. The writing is an accurate reproduction of the force and tenor of the original saying, but not necessarily a word-for-word repetition of it. What Jeremiah did, as related in the thirty-sixth chapter of the Book of Jeremiah, throws much light upon this question. He was told to write down upon a roll "all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day;" that is, for twenty-three years. In the present Book of Jeremiah that roll would be represented by about a dozen chapters which in turn record the sermons of twice as many years. Manifestly, one discourse will often sum up the distinctive ideas of a whole season of active preaching.

Closely allied to the preceding characteristic of the prophetic writings is another. Many a paragraph in a prophetic book is a fragment of an independent discourse. Isaiah 14 : 24-27, or 14 : 29-32, or the three sections of chapter 21, are obvious examples of such fragments. Such passages as Micah 2 : 12, 13, or Hosea 1 : 10 to 2 : 1, which are evidently out of their original connection, are most readily explained in this way. Much of the disjointedness of the Book of Hosea may be due to the fragmentary character of the utter-

ances there collected. The curious alternation of threats and promises in Micah 4 and 5 is explained by Nowack as the combination, by an editor, of extracts from two entirely different discourses, uttered at separated periods. To adopt all these views is far from necessary, but the student of prophetic literature must expect the records of the utterances of the prophets to be more or less fragmentary as well as condensed.

From a literary standpoint the student of prophecy is impressed by the artistic finish given to many an oracle. The prophet was often both poet and orator. He was anxious to persuade, and utilized any means which would contribute to his purpose. Every rhetorical artifice was used by him. The overstatement, "there is no truth nor mercy nor knowledge of God in the land" (Hosea 4 : 1) ; the threat intensified by indefiniteness, "Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel, and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel" (Amos 4: 12) ; the play upon words, "the houses of Achzib shall be an *achzab* unto the kings of Israel" (Micah 1 : 14) ; the metaphor, the epithet, the rhapsody, the apostrophe, and many other legitimate devices for enlivening and emphasizing speech, all illustrate the prophet's remarkable skill in the presentation of truth.

Still another prominent element in prophecy is its

practical character. The prophet was a preacher to his own generation. Nearly every word he uttered had a practical relation to the life of his day. If he referred to the distant future, it was usually a word of hope to a people who were facing disappointment or disaster; if he portrayed the universal acceptance of Jehovah as God, it was in order to confirm his declaration that Jehovah was the ruler, not of Israel alone, but of the world. His greatest predictions were expressed in forms well adapted to the thought of his time. The triumph of God's kingdom, for instance, is pictured as a rallying of worshipers from all quarters of the earth to Jerusalem, the holy city. The Messianic blessedness is described as an era of plenty and peace. The student of the Old Testament does not need to literalize such declarations any more than the saying of our Lord about the heavenly banquet with the patriarchs (Matt. 8 : 11).

It is enough to add that he who interprets the prophetic writings must expect to apply to them all the usual literary tests before he can obtain a true appreciation of their beauty of form and strength of thought.

HOW TO MAKE USE OF A PARAPHRASE

The following pages contain an analysis and paraphrase of the prophetic writings in the order of their original appearance. A paraphrase is a restatement of a passage in literature which gives the exact sense of the original in other words, for the sake of making it clearly understood. To one who desires to grasp with clearness the thought of these books of the Bible, and lacks the time or training or tools for making a painstaking study of each, a paraphrase may be invaluable. The prophetic books are obscure for a variety of reasons. The reader who takes up the Bible and turns to the Book of Isaiah cannot easily put himself into the situation which occasioned the message he may begin to read. In the absence of this historical context, however, the passage will probably fail to awaken his interest, or to suggest a distinctive and helpful idea. It is more than possible that the thought suggested to the reader's mind will be one entirely foreign to the mind of the prophet when he spoke. The terse and technical language of the prophet is another cause for obscurity. The Old Testament makes free use of a vocabulary which requires explanation to one not accustomed to it. "I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your

young men for Nazirites ; . . . but ye gave the Nazirites wine to drink, and commanded the prophets, saying, 'Prophesy not ;' " "The virgin daughter of Zion hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn ; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee ;" "The remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward." Such passages as these convey but a faint impression to the average reader. A third source of obscurity is the necessity for the rearrangement of prophetic passages before a student can perceive the true connection and sequence of ideas. Without this perception no comprehension of the constructive thought of the prophet is attainable.

For all these reasons a paraphrase may be of supreme service as an introduction to the study of prophecy. It prepares the way by placing each prophetic utterance in its proper setting, and by indicating its exact meaning. It does not become a substitute for the Bible, but may be used to make the Bible more intelligible. The following suggestions may promote its use.

The rapid reading of a paraphrase of a prophecy will afford a correct and forcible impression of the prophet's thought. It emphasizes his theme, and outlines his treatment of it, and thus ensures an intelligent reading of the passage in the Bible.

The paraphrase can then be carefully compared with the original prophecy, paragraph by paragraph, until the student has obtained a fairly clear idea of what the prophet said, and his manner of saying it. The paraphrase will facilitate this by explaining in advance many puzzling phrases.

A paraphrase is necessarily an interpretation. It often chooses one out of several possible renderings, a choice which the independent student may not ratify. The decision is not made carelessly in the first place, but should not be considered as final. The great value of the paraphrase is the short cut which it affords to independence in the reading and interpretation of Scripture.

A paraphrase opens the way to the busy man or woman to enter upon the most interesting phase of Bible study, the comparison of prophet with prophet in surroundings, method, distinctive ideas, and outlook, and their arrangement in a developing series. The prophets were independent thinkers, each putting in his own way the divine message with which he had been entrusted; yet their teachings possess fundamental unity, and a continuity which can be traced through every chapter. They struggled with problems which confront the human mind in every age, and possess perennial attraction. When the student becomes able

to state to himself the ideas which they held in common, and the questions which they aimed to answer; to determine each prophet's contribution to the discussion, and to realize how God led them step by step to the discovery of the broadest and most fundamental truth regarding God and man and the universe,—he has discovered the secret of making his reading of the whole Old Testament a never-ending delight.

THE MESSAGE OF AMOS THE JUDEAN TO NORTHERN ISRAEL

THE MESSAGE OF AMOS THE JUDEAN TO NORTHERN ISRAEL

I

THE PROPHET, AND THE PEOPLE TO WHOM HE SPOKE

It was an eventful moment in the history of mankind, as well as in that of the Hebrew race, when Amos, the Judean shepherd, stood up at Bethel, the great royal sanctuary of the northern kingdom, to preach, in the name of Jehovah, to the assembled Israelites. The date was about the middle of the eighth century B. C., the opening days of which had been characterized by a remarkable increase in the political and material prosperity of the two Hebrew kingdoms, and the closing years of which were destined to witness the deep humiliation of Judah and the complete annihilation of Israel. Assyria, the cause of these mighty changes, had not yet laid her iron hand upon the petty states of Palestine, although she had already given them repeated warnings. Their fate was delayed only until the reins of power should fall into the hands of strong and ambitious monarchs who

would turn westward the invincible legions of the great empire. The more thoughtful of the Israelites could not shut their eyes to the fact that Assyria, who in crippling their old foe, the Arameans, had proved a savior to them (1 Kings 13 : 5), was a dangerous neighbor. The majority of the princes and people, however, trusting to their military equipment, and to the protection of Jehovah, which they confidently hoped to gain through the wealth of their offerings, had succeeded in completely blinding their eyes to the perils of the situation. The tribute and products of foreign art, which, as a result of the conquests and commercial policy of the reigning king, Jeroboam II, for the first time since the age of Solomon came to the Israelites in rich abundance, aroused new ambitions and tastes. The mutual regard for each other's interests which had existed between rulers and people while they were struggling together against common want and adversity, had disappeared. In the new-born desire to gratify their love of display and luxury, the ruling classes were cruelly wronging those who were dependent upon them.

The mass of the people still conceived of Jehovah very much as their neighbors the Moabites, or Edomites, conceived of their national gods. While they faithfully bore to his sanctuaries rich offerings, and abstained from the worship of rival deities, they felt confident that he

would protect their interests as far as he was able. The readiness with which the Hebrews in succeeding generations from time to time paid homage to other gods is but one of the many indications that the conception of Jehovah as the one and the supreme God in the universe was not yet a tenet in their popular faith. The Hebrew race had only learned their alphabet in the great school of divine revelation. In accordance with the purpose of the Eternal, great political transformations were soon to take place. These were destined to open the minds of certain humble consecrated men to the appreciation of new and revolutionizing truths. Made prophets by virtue of the possession of this broader conception of Jehovah's character and demands, they came before their contemporaries to proclaim a nobler ideal of life and service. In contrast with the imperfect old, it was an almost new religion.

The mass of the people clung tenaciously to the ancient half-truths of the past, which, in the light of the fuller revelation, figured only as superstitions and fallacies. Assyria's victorious advance shook their faith in Jehovah's willingness and power to deliver his people. The prophets alone, whose souls were open to the influence of his divine spirit, realized that he was the supreme God of the universe, and that the calamity, which was soon to overtake their nation, came not be-

cause he was unable to avert it, but because the sins of his people rendered such a judgment necessary. Here is found the explanation of the popular indifference and contempt with which the messages of the pre-exilic prophets were greeted. Their break with the past was too abrupt, their ideal was too lofty, their teaching was too pure, to gain general acceptance. Not until bitter national experiences had prepared the way, did the people begin to heed the warnings and the counsels of their enlightened leaders.

The task which confronted Amos, therefore, was not inviting. As he observed the injustice, the oppression, the self-indulgent luxury, the indifference and immorality, which characterized the northern kingdom, he found little encouragement that his word of denunciation would be heeded. The fact that he was a humble shepherd, who gained his living by following the lowliest pursuit which poverty-stricken Judah offered, was anything but a favorable introduction to the opulent northerners. His solemn face, his rude attire, and, above all, his accent, which indicated that he was a native of insignificant Judah, must have aroused at once a violent prejudice against him in the minds of that gay throng which streamed up to celebrate a great feast-day at the wealthy and popular shrine at Bethel. His message also was one of uncompromising denunciation; for

while, on the barren uplands which extend from Tekoah, his home, eastward toward the Dead Sea, he had watched the patient sheep, and meditated long and deeply upon the evils and dangers of the present situation, Jehovah had revealed to him an ideal of justice which threw into startling relief the injustice rampant in Israel. Simple, straightforward, fearless man that he was, with no attempt at palliation he laid bare all its social and religious corruption, and declared that, as sure as Jehovah was a God of justice, he must and would destroy that corrupt northern kingdom. The effect upon the rulers, who were the especial object of his attack, can be imagined. The fact that his charge was true only increased their rage. The seventh chapter tells us that the moment he referred to the approaching overthrow of the reigning house, and thus gave an occasion for an accusation of treason, Amaziah, the chief priest at Bethel, reported to the king that Amos had conspired against him, and that for the peace of the kingdom this rebellious prophet must be suppressed. "The land is not able to hear his words," was his suggestive confession. Apparently not waiting for an order from Jeroboam, Amaziah forthwith commanded Amos to flee back to Judah, and there gain a living by prophesying, if he could, but never again to open his mouth at the royal sanctuary of Bethel. "I am not a professional

prophet, as your sneering words imply," was Amos's response, "nor do I belong to any of the prophetical guilds ; but I am a plain man who earns his daily bread by honest toil. From my lowly tasks Jehovah called and commanded me to deliver a message to the northern kingdom. In silencing me you are defying Jehovah. Upon you, who represent the class I came to denounce, and upon your family, shall be visited all the miseries of conquest and captivity." It is not improbable that that act of tyranny, which brought the mission of Amos to an abrupt end, led him to preach with the pen when his lips were silenced, and thus rendered his words immortal.

He certainly is the first of that remarkable group of prophets who speak to us through their writings almost as clearly to-day as they did to the surging, impatient, curious crowds of Hebrews who gathered about them twenty-six centuries ago. In imagination, taking our place in one of these audiences, we may listen to the stern message of Amos, and follow his thought, even though in translating it into nineteenth-century phraseology we lose much of the beauty and force of the rugged, poetical Hebrew in which he wrapped his ideas as he hurled them at his hearers.

II

THE OPENING ADDRESS AT BETHEL (1 : 2 to 2 : 16)

1. *The Text* (1 : 2)

Jehovah, justly indignant because of the crimes of the nations, is about to send upon the earth a destructive judgment, so severe that the most fertile spots shall become utterly barren and desolate.

2. *Introduction. The Sins and Condemnation of Israel's Neighbors* (1 : 3 to 2 : 5)

Are you enraged, O Israelites, at the suggestion, contained in my text, that upon you judgment is soon to be visited? Listen a moment before you turn your backs upon me. I come to declare that, although Jehovah has repeatedly overlooked the offenses of your hated enemies, the Arameans, their cup of transgression is at last filled to overflowing. No longer will he withhold well-merited punishment. An utter disregard of the obligations, recognized by heathen nations even in time of war, such as appeared, for example, in their inhuman treatment of the conquered Gileadites, your brethren, is a crime which cannot be condoned. Jehovah, whose sway is not limited to the land of Canaan (as some of you in your ignorance still suppose), will avenge those awful deeds of cruelty. The family of the merciless

Guilt of the Arameans and the doom which awaits them (1 : 3-5).

conqueror Hazael shall be hurled from the throne of Damascus; the defenses of that proud city shall be broken down, and the inhabitants of the land shall be slain. Those of the condemned race who survive shall be carried away into distant captivity.

Retribution for the Philistines (1 : 6-8).

Not the Arameans only, but those uncircumcised Philistines, whom you hate so intensely, have sinned until Jehovah cannot forgive. Heathen though they were, they knew that it was a crime to sell remorselessly into galling slavery old men, women, children,—all, whether friends or foes, who fell into their hands. Jehovah, who rules the nations, will visit their guilt upon their heads. Destroyed shall be their great cities, slain shall be king and people.

Retribution for the Tyrians (1 : 9, 10).

For similar acts of cruelty the Tyrians shall receive like recompense at the hands of Jehovah. Remorseless fire shall consume their proud city with its palaces.

Retribution for the Edomites (1 : 11, 12).

Naturally, in the same connection you think of the Edomites. Their hour of retribution likewise is at hand. These unnatural kinsmen of yours lost no opportunity in your time of weakness to give you a mortal thrust. They showed no mercy; neither will Jehovah spare them.

Retribution for the Ammonites (1 : 13-15).

The Ammonites also belong to that accursed circle of cruel, implacable foes who have tried to drag you down and drink your life-blood. No longer will Jehovah

overlook the deeds of brutality to which their thirst for conquest has led them. At his command their cities and palaces shall fall before a tempest of war and destruction, and their rulers shall be carried into captivity.

Retribution for the Moabites (2 : 1-3).

Moreover, Jehovah declares that the Moabites have transgressed beyond the possibility of forgiveness. True, you have succeeded in subduing them, and therefore their most atrocious sins are not those of cruelty. You all recall how, prompted by bitter hatred for their treacherous southern foes, disregarding the sanctity of the dead, —held inviolable even by savages,—they dragged forth the bones of an Edomite king, and burned them. Upon their cities and rulers, therefore, shall be visited the same bitter woes of war and conquest.

Retribution for the Judeans (2 : 4, 5).

I can see by your approval, O Israelites, that you welcome the news of the judgment which Jehovah is about to execute upon these heathen peoples. In so doing you accept the great truth that he rules, not only over Israel, but also over these nations, and that, although he is long-suffering, there comes a time when he must punish unchecked evils. You also acknowledge the principle that, as responsibility is proportionate to enlightenment, so likewise is the punishment, if the responsibility is rejected. Hence, you will agree that Jehovah is just in sending retribution upon the Judeans, who, knowing his will far better than those other nations, have treacherously failed

to comply with his laws. They, like their heathen neighbors, shall experience the horrors of conquest.

3. *The Sins and Condemnation of Israel* (2 : 6-16).

Crimes which precludе pardon (2 : 6-8).

Hear now, O Israelites, the painful message that Jehovah has sent me to declare. Your cup of transgression also is full to overflowing, so that just punishment can no longer be withheld. Like the royal culprit David, you stand condemned in accordance with the same principles which you have so readily accepted in the case of others. The only difference between you and your barbarian neighbors is that your sins are more heinous. If you question this, behold the injustice and the inhuman cruelty of your rulers. They do not hesitate to sacrifice an honest man, if they think that they can themselves gain a farthing thereby. Their insatiable greed has exhausted every spark of mercy in their hearts. The most shameless immorality is openly practised. Worst of all, like the Canaanites, they gratify their lust under the guise of religion ; and, to make their guilt complete, in sating their unholy appetites, they use, as accessories, the possessions which they have unjustly extorted from their needy dependents.

What Jehovah has done for this people (2 : 9-11).

Compare with their base ingratitude all that Jehovah has done for them. When they were a disorganized nation of serfs, he delivered them from bondage in

Egypt; he led them through the perils of the wilderness; he enabled them to subdue this land of Canaan, possessed though it was by powerful peoples. For their spiritual nurture, he sent to them prophets to teach, by word of mouth, his will, and Nazirites to illustrate, by their lives, the ideals of purity and of consecration.

Instead of learning the lesson which Jehovah sought to inculcate, they silenced his prophets and induced the Nazirites to break their holy vows of abstinence. Their base return (2 : 12).

National annihilation awaits them at the hand of Jehovah. In the coming day of judgment, neither the strongest, nor the swiftest, nor the best equipped, nor the most courageous, shall escape the overwhelming destruction. Dire retribution for Israel (2 : 13-16).

III

NO EXCUSE OR PARDON FOR THE CRIMES OF ISRAEL'S LEADERS (3 and 4)

Give heed, O Israelites, to the solemn message which Jehovah sends to you, his favored people. "True, you of all nations stand in a peculiarly intimate relation to me. Do not deceive yourselves, however, by thinking that for that reason you will be exempted from punishment. On the contrary, greater privilege brings with it Responsibility proportionate to opportunity (3 : 1, 2).

greater responsibility, and therefore, in the light of your base betrayal of the trust, severer judgment."

The prophet's vindication of his right to prophesy (3 : 3-8)

Some of you question my right thus to address you in the name of Jehovah. Consider : Does anything come to pass in the natural world without a sufficient cause ? Conversely, does not a sufficient cause produce a corresponding effect ?

The fact that I stand here preaching to you, although so doing endangers my life, implies a cause, namely, that Jehovah has given me a revelation concerning you. When he commands, his prophet must obey.

Israel guilty even in the eyes of the heathen (3 : 9, 10).

You are the chosen people of Jehovah ! Let proclamation be made, and your heathen neighbors summoned to witness the state of anarchy within your capital, and the crimes of oppression and of legalized robbery which your nobles are committing.

Fate awaiting the corrupt rulers (3 : 11-15).)

While such enormities exist, think not for a moment that your land, and those greedy rulers who are betraying you, shall escape the common judgment. Worthless shall be that which is left of all these princely palaces, with their luxurious appointments ; overthrown shall be the royal sanctuary here at Bethel, when the rapacious world-conqueror who is advancing has completed his work of destruction.

Voluptuous, thoughtless women of Samaria, who have so completely lost all sense of pity for the afflicted that

you are constantly urging on your husbands to grind their dependents the more, that, with the blood-money thus secured, they may pander to your vile appetites, listen to your sentence. As surely as a God of justice lives, brutal conquerors shall soon come to drag you forth as captives.

Guilt of the wives of the nobles (4 : 1-3).

Do you urge, O Israelites, that you are punctilious in bringing to Jehovah rich offerings, and that, therefore, he cannot think of inflicting upon you a judgment such as I predict? Deluded fools! Go on with your round of ceremonies, regulated so as to conduce to your personal pleasure. In the eyes of Jehovah it is mere mockery.

Vanity of the ceremonial worship (4 : 4, 5).

All this ritualistic service has only lulled your consciences to rest, so that you have been insensible to the most obvious indications of divine displeasure. As you must all remember, he has sent upon you famine, drought, insect plagues, pestilence, and earthquake in their most hideous forms, and yet you have not learned the lesson he would teach and turned to him in penitence.

Jehovah's plain warnings unheeded (4 : 6-11).

You stand convicted of the most heinous charges ever brought against a nation; the fatuity of the defense which you have urged has been conclusively demonstrated; you have persistently refused to heed Jehovah's plain and repeated warnings; therefore, prepare to meet

Inevitable doom impending (4 : 12, 13)

the awful and inevitable judgment, which Jehovah, the all-powerful creator and just ruler of the universe, is soon to execute upon you.

IV

EXTRACTS FROM SERMONS OF EXHORTATION AND WARNING

1. *Ritual Useless to Deliver from the Consequences of Moral Guilt* (5)

A lament (5 : 1-3).

Let ring in your ears, O Israelites, the sad dirge which shall soon be sung over your nation :

> Fallen, never again to rise,
> Is the virgin Israel ;
> Prostrate upon her soil she lies ;
> There is none to raise her. [1]

For grim war shall speedily do its devastating work, and only a small fraction of your population shall survive.

Repentance, not ritual, will save, (5 : 4-9).

Would you escape your doom ? Then do not resort to the public shrines with offerings in your hand. There is no salvation in so doing. Those sanctuaries, with

[1] Here the prophet introduces the peculiar rhythmic parallelism consisting of an alternating long and short member, which was regularly employed in the Hebrew elegy.

their corrupt services, are themselves objects of divine wrath. Gilgal shall drink to her fill the gall of exile; Bethel, house of God, shall become a house of perdition.[1] The only and sufficient way to secure deliverance is to go directly to Jehovah with the earnest prayer of contrition. Lose no time, O perverters of justice! lest his vengeance overwhelm the northern kingdom, and it be too late to appeal for mercy to him who, meting out judgment to the strong as well as to the weak, rules supreme in nature and in human affairs.

Depravity of the leaders (5 : 10-13).

Alas! you, who are Israel's leaders, give no evidence of repentance. Your attitude toward one who denounces your crimes is that of bitter hostility. Intent only upon building palaces for yourselves, and upon gratifying your luxurious desires, you extort from the poor; you persecute an honest man in the courts; you grant the decision to the one who gives you the largest bribe. So completely is evil in the ascendency that a wise man submits to injustice without a protest. I warn you solemnly that you will never enjoy the fruits of your iniquitous conduct.

Advice and encouragement for the few faithful (5 : 14, 15).

To whomsoever my words appeal I repeat, persevere in your efforts to do that which is right in the sight of God, and he, the all-powerful and just, will not fail

[1] A rude attempt is here made to reproduce the play on words contained in the Hebrew, "Ha-Gilgal gālōh yigleh."

you. Undauntedly strive to put down public evil, and to purify the law courts; perchance a faithful few may yet survive the approaching destruction to enjoy Jehovah's blessings and favor.

The national disaster impending (5: 16-20).

For Israel as a whole the immediate future has nothing but woe. Instead of the present mad revels, wails of lamentation shall rise from every class. Deluded are those who long for the time when Jehovah will interpose in human history. "The day of Jehovah" shall bring no joy to this guilty people, but only misfortune and retribution.

Ceremonial offerings, without righteous conduct, a mockery (5: 21-27).

Hold not up your ceremonial services as a cloak to cover your crimes, for Jehovah takes no pleasure in empty forms. Put them away, for they are utterly repugnant to him. The multitude of your burnt and your meal offerings, and your elaborate ritual, are meaningless when not accompanied with righteous deeds. Would you win his favor? Then let your every act be governed by the laws of justice. During the years of your wilderness wanderings you could bring him no sacrifices, and yet was he not pleased with you? Conformity, not to ceremonial laws, but to those of right, is the essence of true service. Since justice is completely lacking in your national character, you shall be carried into captivity, bearing the heathen gods with whom you are now sharing the homage due Jehovah.

2. *Israel's Blind, Selfish Rulers Leading their Nation to Certain Ruin* (6)

A curse on you, voluptuous, careless rulers, upon whom devolves the direction of these two powerful Hebrew kingdoms! Shutting your eyes to the grave dangers which threaten, you enthrone injustice, and devote your whole attention to gratifying your love of ease and luxury. As if life were only one long revel, you sing foolish songs, drinking yourselves drunk, anointing yourselves with costly perfumes, wholly indifferent to the ruin which hangs over this goodly land of Israel. Heartless self-indulgence of the rulers (6 : 1-6).

Therefore, when the foreign conqueror comes, these dissolute leaders, who have betrayed their trust, will be among the first to taste the woes of captivity. Jehovah, disgusted with all this vain show and criminal luxury, has determined to bring upon Israel all the horrors of war. Pestilence shall complete the direful work of the sword, so that the few panic-stricken survivors shall not dare to utter the name of Jehovah, lest still further judgment be called down upon them. In the general collapse, together shall crumble palace and hovel. Sentence upon the rulers and nation (6 : 7-11).

Think not for a moment that you will realize the impossible. You cannot persist in your course of injustice and expect to enjoy the rewards of equity. Trust not in your military strength and powers to save you; for Israel's conquest by Assyria inevitable (6 : 12-14).

already Jehovah is arousing an invincible nation, which will devastate your land, O Israelites, from your northern to your southernmost border.

V

SYMBOLIC VISIONS OF IMPENDING JUDGMENT (7 : 1-9 ; 8 : 1 to 9 : 6)

The lesson of the locust plague (7 : 1-3).

If you do not apprehend the full significance of my plain statements, O Israel, I will present the same truths to you in pictures, so that, with the aid of memory and of imagination, you may see as well as hear, and thus perchance be led to profit by my message. During those troublesome days through which you have passed,[1] my eyes, enlightened by Jehovah, beheld the dread sight of a vast army of locusts sweeping over the land, devastating all before them. The calamity was the greater because it came just as the people were about to reap their spring crops, upon which they depended for subsistence. Recognizing that it was sent as a judgment, I besought Jehovah to pardon, not because the punishment was unmerited, but because Israel was so unprepared to survive it. Infinitely compassionate, he granted my petition, and spared.

[1] Cf. 4 : 6-11.

Fiery judgment averted (7 : 4-6).

Again the Almighty opened my eyes, not only to see, but to understand, the significance of a consuming drought, which like a mighty conflagration dried up the great source of all waters, and threatened to burn up the parched earth. Knowing that it was sent in judgment, I besought him to spare, and again he answered me.

Israel measured by the plummet and found wanting (7 : 7-9).

Still a third time Jehovah presented to my mind a vision of himself standing with a plummet in his hand. When I understood the meaning of that symbol of impartial justice, no longer could I crave mercy for Israel, that nation fallen so far from the standard of right. Therefore I listened to Jehovah's declaration that he would no more pardon his people, but that rather he would speedily bring upon their corrupt sanctuaries and ruling house the fire and sword of the conqueror.

Israel ripe for judgment (8 : 1-14).

When Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, drove me forth, denying to Jehovah's prophet free utterance,—his God-given right,—there rose before me the vision of a basket of summer fruit, luscious, outwardly attractive, but dead ripe, and destined within a few days to become a mass of loathsome putrefaction. "Even thus," for so Jehovah interpreted to me, "is Israel ripe[1] for punishment." Bitter cries of lamentation shall soon succeed present festivity. Where now stands the joyful throng, heaps of

[1] In the Hebrew *Kêtz*, "end," represents a play on the word *Kaitz*, "summer fruits."

corpses, hushed in death, shall lie. Know the fate which awaits you, rapacious rulers and merchants,— you who show no mercy to the poor and needy, you whose chief aim is to cheat both God and your fellow-men. As surely as Jehovah is omnipotent, your sins shall be punished. Nature shall conspire with the hostile foe to complete the destruction of your land. Anguish inexpressible shall fill all hearts. Then, too late, shall arise an intense longing to receive a prophetic message from Jehovah ; but none shall then be vouchsafed. The ardent devotees of the popular shrines, such as Samaria and Dan, shall likewise share the common fate.

Divine vengeance upon the nation (9 : 1-6).

As I meditated upon the conditions which I found in Northern Israel, the corruption of civil and religious rulers, the hollow formalism of the national religion, the blind popular confidence in ceremonialism, I seemed to see Jehovah standing above the altar from whence the smoke of their sacrifices rose. No blessing descended. Instead came the command to smite the supports of the great temple, which forthwith fell in overwhelming ruin upon the heads of the worshipers. With that command came the divine declaration that the sword should complete the work of destruction. Neither in the depths of the earth, nor on the dizzy heights, nor within lonely mountain caves, nor in the distant lands of exile, should escape be found from the hand of the avenger. He who

rules supreme over the forces of heaven and earth, Jehovah, at whose command land and sea are transformed, has issued the mandate,—let no one hope for an instant that that just decree shall fail of fulfilment.

VI

THE IMMEDIATE AND DISTANT FUTURE OF THE HEBREW RACE (9 : 7-15)

Israel answerable to the same divine laws as other peoples (9 : 7).

Urge no longer, O Israelites, the vain plea that Jehovah stands in such a peculiarly close relation to you that he will not destroy you. In his sight you are on an equality with the dark-skinned Ethiopians. True, he led you as a nation out of Egypt, but in precisely the same way he guided your hated enemies, the Philistines and the Arameans, as they set out from the lands of their nativity, and finally gave them a home in Palestine.

Punishment of the nation shall be proportionate to its guilt (9 : 8-10).

Jehovah sees all of Israel's guilt, and, since he is a God of impartial justice, he can do nothing but destroy this wicked, defiant state. Yet the Hebrew race shall not be completely cut off, for all are not equally culpable. To eliminate the evil from the good, Jehovah will scatter them among the nations, and captivity, like a sieve, will separate the different elements in the nation. The defiant reprobates, who lull the people to sleep with beguil-

ing assurances that no danger impends, will receive their just desert at the edge of the sword ; but over each faithful one Jehovah will carefully watch, that none may be lost.

Epilogue : promise to the faithful of a glorious restoration in the distant future (9 : 11-15).

[Jehovah declares that when captivity has done its work of sifting, and when the Hebrew race has learned, through discipline, its solemn lessons, he will revive the humbled kingdom, over which David once reigned, and will restore to it the prestige and wide rule of that glorious era. In those coming days, so abundant shall be the fruits of the soil that, before they are gathered in, it will be time again to begin the sowing. Productive vineyards shall crown every hill-top. To enjoy this rich bounty of nature, and to rebuild the old ruins, Jehovah will recall his scattered people, and will establish them in their land, from whence they shall never again be torn.]

THE MESSAGE OF HOSEA

THE MESSAGE OF HOSEA

I

THE PROPHET, AND THE CONDITIONS CONFRONTING HIM

Five or ten years after Amos the Judean delivered his stirring sermons at Bethel, Hosea began to preach to his countrymen. The geographical and historical allusions, and the intense sympathy for northern Israel, which appear in his every utterance, leave no doubt that he was a northerner, and probably a Galilean. Love for Israel's fair fields and hills, for her people, as well as for her God, was his master-passion. Although the obscure broken sentences, which burst from his lips, almost conceal the fact, Hosea was at heart a poet. Sometimes shutting his eyes to the conditions which confronted him, he gave expression to his poetic insight, and projected into the distant future the ideal of perfect harmony and love between Jehovah and his creation which filled his soul and dominated his every word and act. His fate it was, however, to stand by and see that ideal ruthlessly trampled upon by his perversely unappreciative

countrymen. When he entered upon his prophetic activity, a little before 740 B. C., the social, political, and religious evils which Amos pointed out so plainly were already beginning to sap the strength of the state; but the strong hand of Jeroboam II (Hosea 1 : 4) still held the kingdom together, and the Israelites did not realize how near was the national ruin, which Hosea repeatedly proclaimed in his sermons, preserved in Chapters I–III.

The two or three years immediately following the death of Jeroboam II revealed Israel's fatal weakness. The inefficient son who succeeded the old king was murdered by Menahem, who maintained his position on the tottering throne by purchasing with heavy tribute, wrung from his unwilling subjects, the support of Israel's most dreaded foe, Assyria. By this act, Israel's prestige and that of its king were forever forfeited. With an unprincipled assassin on the throne, all law and order were relaxed. The body politic became corrupt from top to bottom. In this atmosphere the social evils which Amos denounced increased rather than abated.

Private as well as public honor was lost. Immorality was openly practised unrebuked. The debasing customs of the Canaanitish neighbors of the Israelites were eagerly adopted. The hollow ceremonial worship of Jehovah, which had served well enough as a national

religion in time of prosperity, broke down under the test of adversity. The nation, which had lost faith in itself and had begun to seek support in foreign alliances, also began to lose faith in the Jehovah, whom, in their thought, they had degraded almost to the level of a heathen deity. Israel presented the sad example of a nation in the state of moral, political, and religious collapse, while slowly the irresistible, insatiable foe, Assyria, was advancing to crush it. Its condition arouses to-day our contempt and pity. In imagination it is possible to appreciate, in part, at least, what must have been the anguish of the inspired poet, patriot, and prophet, who was forced to witness the suicide of his beloved nation. In the light of these facts we understand why the extracts from his sermons, delivered during these tragic days and preserved in Chapters IV–XIV, are impassioned—often obscure—cries, now of denunciation, now of anguish, now of entreaty. Before the final blow came, which ended Israel's life in 722 B. C., Hosea's voice apparently was silenced either by heart-break or martyrdom ; for throughout these later chapters there are no allusions to the closing scenes in the great tragedy. Gilead and the territory about the Sea of Galilee, which, in 734 B. C. were conquered and annexed to Assyria, were still a part of the northern kingdom (Hosea 5 : 1 ; 6 : 8 ; 12 : 11) ; so that these sermons

were delivered between the years 740 and 734 B. C., probably during the profligate, degenerate reign of Menahem. The other tragedy, which darkened Hosea's life, and which laid bare the very depths of his soul, is alluded to in his earlier sermons, and can best be presented as he hesitatingly tells his own sad story.

II

EARLIER SERMONS DELIVERED BETWEEN 750 AND 740 B. C.

1. *The Private Experiences of the Prophet* (1 : 2, 3[a]; 3 : 1-3; cf. 2 : 2-23)

Hosea's marriage to Gomer (1 : 2, 3[a])

You are all familiar, fellow-Israelites, with my sad personal experience. As I look back upon those hopeful days of my youth when I wedded Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, I can see that all the pain and agony which have followed in the train of that act have not been without their compensations. I felt that the same Jehovah guided me then who has guided me since in my work as a prophet. True, I had no absolute assurance that she whom I wedded would prove more faithful than many of her sisters who, under the corrupt influences of this age, have sinned so grossly; but the love which I

gave her was strong and pure, and I trusted that she would return it.

His attempts to reclaim his erring wife (3 : 1-3).

You all know how bitterly I was deceived, and yet you can never know the agony I endured when I discovered the evidence of her faithlessness. If I had loved her less, I should have simply divorced her as our customs permit. Weak, false though she was, I could not forget the solemn covenant into which we had entered, and abandon her to her fate; and so I forgave and overlooked her gross infidelity, and tried by greater tenderness and acts of love to woo her back to the path of rectitude. Alas! bitterly was I disappointed in my endeavor. In her folly and perversity she spurned my love and fled from my home to live a life of infamy. Undoubtedly, many would then have only tried to forget her, but I could not because of my great love. When I heard that she had fallen so low that she had been put up for sale as a slave, I ransomed her. Kindness having failed, the love within my heart commanded me, as a last means, to strive by discipline to lead her to true repentance.

The lessons which his tragic experience taught him (Cf. 2 : 2-23)

You all know the result. Painful, yes, tragic, has been my experience, and you doubtless feel for me only pity, if not contempt, because you think that I have squandered my affection upon such an unworthy object. Pity I certainly deserve, and yet in this trying school of affliction I have learned lessons which have made me

the prophet that I am. Now I realize the anguish which the sin of a dear one brings to the heart which loves ; now I understand how the flame of true love can burn clear and strong even though the object of that affection stumble and fall ; now I perceive clearly that judgment is but an expression of love, for ofttimes chastisement is the only method of reclaiming the fallen ; now I know how eager, yes, willing, is a loving heart to forgive all the bitter wrongs which it has received from the one beloved, when once that sinner gives evidence of true contrition. If you would understand my message, recall the personal experiences of the man who utters it.

2. *Living Sermons* (1 : 3b-9)

Significance of the name Jezreel, (1 : 3b-5).

When Gomer brought to me her first-born son, I gave him no sweet, pleasing name like my own,[1] but, sent as I was by Jehovah to preach to my nation, I called him Jezreel. Naturally, the people, filled with curiosity, inquired why I associated with an innocent baby the name of Israel's blood-stained battle-field. Thereupon I declared to them the truth, as it had been revealed to me : "The day will quickly come when Jehovah will punish the reigning house of Israel for the bloody crime whereby its founder Jehu secured the throne, slaying his royal

[1] Hoshea, the same as Joshua or Jesus, meaning "salvation."

master on that plain of Jezreel. On the same historic battle-field shall be broken the strength of the northern kingdom."

When my faithless wife again bore a child, this time a daughter, the anguish aroused in my heart by the knowledge of her infidelity led me more perfectly to appreciate the divine indignation kindled by Israel's persistent apostasy. Accordingly I gathered up that new revelation in the one word, "Lo-ruhamah,"—"unpitied,"—and gave it to the little girl, thus making her likewise a living prophecy to be read by all men at all times. By this name I proclaimed that "No longer, O house of Israel, will Jehovah pity and pardon you as he has done in the past." Significance of the name Lo-ruhamah (1 : 6).

To the youngest boy also I gave the name "Lo-ammi," whose meaning, "not my people," was so unequivocal that even the most obtuse could not fail to perceive that it was a declaration that Jehovah had completely repudiated the close covenant relations between the nation Israel and himself. Significance of the name Lo-ammi (1 : 8, 9).

3. *The Relationship between Jehovah and Israel in Retrospect and Prospect* (2 : 2-23)

Indeed, almost too terrible to be credible are the grim predictions contained in the names Jezreel, Lo-ruhamah, and Lo-ammi ; and yet while the nation Israel persists

Jehovah's fidelity and Israel's infidelity (2 : 2-5).

in its apostasy no other relationship between her and Jehovah than that which they suggest is possible. Therefore I implore you, O fellow-citizens, in the name of God, spare no effort whereby you may, perchance, influence this nation, our common mother, to turn from her gross crimes, and from her apostasy, before she forfeits forever the possibility of divine forgiveness. As I was wedded to my wife Gomer, so Jehovah, at the beginning of Israel's national life, chose and entered into a solemn covenant relation with Israel. On the one hand, Jehovah covenanted to love and care for his people, while the nation, on the other, agreed faithfully to serve and obey him. How has that solemn contract been kept? You well know that, even as I heaped upon my wife all the blessings a loving heart could suggest, so Jehovah has been absolutely true to his obligations, delivering Israel from innumerable perils, and bestowing upon her freely the wealth of his infinite love. And this nation? Gomer is its true type; for as soon as Israel became established in Palestine she began to forget Jehovah and to pay homage to the Canaanitish Baal. In her folly she thought that the heathen God of fertility would reward her infidelity by blessing her fields and flocks. Thus like the most shameless wanton she sold herself for hire, sinning and sinning again, until Jehovah recognized, as did I in the case of my wife, that favors would

not turn the erring one from the path of guilt. Eternal love must therefore, in the light of the circumstances, find a higher expression in discipline.

Israel must be disciplined (2 : 6-13).

By painful experience the wilful nation must be made to see the utter folly and wickedness of her course. Therefore Jehovah declares that not mercy, but judgment, impends. When her lands and vineyards are laid waste, then shall Israel realize who was the real source of her prosperity. Through hard adversity shall she learn that she has sold herself to Baal for worse than naught. Upon her head shall be visited the consequences of her dallying with this corrupt heathen religion.

The discipline intended to arouse contrition (2 : 14-17)

Jehovah, however, will not punish Israel merely because she deserves it, but as the last means of arousing true contrition. When once that end is attained, he will speak to her heart with infinite tenderness. During her period of national affliction new hopes shall be kindled, for she shall come back into the old relationship with Jehovah, which characterized those earlier and simpler days, when he delivered her from the bondage of Egypt. The names of the heathen gods upon whom she now calls shall be forgotten. Not even shall she address Jehovah as "Ba'ali," *my master*, but by the nobler and much more intimate name of "Ishi," *my husband;* for he will renew, on the basis of mutual fidelity and love, the old covenant, comparable in its close-

ness and reciprocal obligations only to that which exists between husband and wife.

The reconciliation and glorious restoration, which shall follow Israel's repentance (2 : 18-23).

Penitent, forgiven Israel shall then faithfully do the will of Jehovah. The benign influence of this harmonious relationship between God and his chosen people will extend to all the animal world. In that distant day, when the divine will is done on earth, war and strife between Jehovah's creatures will cease, and peace shall reign. Moreover, the Eternal will gladly give command to the heavens, and they will send down the refreshing rains upon the earth, which in turn will put forth its fruits in richest abundance for the beloved people. Then, O Israelites, the name Jezreel, which to-day is a reminder of impending retribution, true to the meaning of the word, will well describe that nation "whom Jehovah has sown." Israel now designated as "Lo-ruhamah" shall be called "the one who has obtained mercy, and they, who were rejected, shall be addressed by Jehovah as "my people."

4. *Predictions respecting Israel's Immediate and Distant Future* (3 : 4, 5 ; 1 : 10 to 2 : 1)

In the absence of true contrition captivity is certain (3 : 4).

It is clear, O fellow-Israelites ! that you eagerly long to see that glorious day, with its peace and prosperity of which you have heard me speak. Know that Jehovah is eager to institute it at once and that whether it is realized now or in some distant time depends entirely

upon your own action. But as I behold with enlightened eyesight your defiant attitude, and how deep seated are your sins, I predict that certain captivity awaits you. For a long time you shall be deprived both of political organization and religious services.

[In the distant future, after captivity has done its preparatory work, the Israelites shall return repentant, craving forgiveness, and eager to serve Jehovah, and submit to the rule of the Davidic king. Then shall their numbers become as the sands of the sea, innumerable; Jehovah's decree of rejection will be revoked, and they shall again be known as "the sons of the living God." From the lands of their captivity the Israelites and Judeans shall be gathered to Canaan, and at last, again united, will elect over them one head. Then shall all animosity disappear before the common joy of restoration, of forgiveness, and of reconciliation with Jehovah.]

An ultimate restoration is also assured (3 : 5; 1 : 10 to 2 : 1).

III

LATER SERMONS DELIVERED BETWEEN 740 AND 734 B.C.

1. *Jehovah's Stern Arraignment and Condemnation of Israel and Israel's Leaders* (4 : 1 to 5 : 14)

Give heed, O Israelites, to the awful charge which Jehovah, as the plaintiff, brings against your nation.

General charge against the nation (4 : 1-3).

Whereas he had every reason to expect the fruits of fidelity and love, and the evidence of a true knowledge of him, he finds none of these ; but false swearing, murder, theft, and adultery, characterize the people. Lawless deeds of bloodshed follow each other in rapid succession. As a result, the very land itself is going to ruin, and its inhabitants are perishing.

The masses misled by their religious leaders (4 : 4-6a).

Not the common people, however, but their leaders, are to blame for this shameful state of affairs.[1] The ordinary citizens cannot be expected to be better than their priests and prophets who have themselves fallen into such heinous crimes. Through ignorance of the real character and demands of the God whom they blindly worship, the masses are perishing.

Condemnation of the corrupt priesthood (4 : 6b-10).

O you faithless priests who, instead of teaching them, have turned your back upon the law, the sacred treasure entrusted to your keeping, Jehovah declares that he has revoked your commission ! Traitors, you have perverted your high office ; you have grown fat on the sin offerings of the people ; you have encouraged them in their crimes. Little wonder that they are so corrupt. The penalty of their guilt shall be upon their own heads. Having given free rein to greed and lust, their appetite

[1] Accepting the emendation demanded by the sense " my people are but as their priestlings." Cf. G. A. Smith, " The Twelve Prophets," I, 257.

shall become an insatiable master ; childlessness shall be their lot.

The gross immorality of the masses (4 : 11-15).

Immorality and intemperance always dim the intellect, as is clearly illustrated by the way in which this people, instead of seeking Jehovah, consult the inanimate symbols of the Baal cult. That corrupt religion, which gives free license to the passions, has led them far astray from the true God. In connection with the rites of Baal, the men have committed abominable excesses. In the light of such an example, Jehovah cannot hold their daughters culpable, even though they have shamelessly bartered their chastity. Thus this stupid people are rapidly rushing on to their ruin. [Although the Israelites are so corrupt, let the Judeans avoid the temptation and shun the northern sanctuaries, with their debasing customs.]

Hopelessness of trying to save the northern kingdom (4 : 16-19).

How can Jehovah exercise his tender care toward Israel, as he fain would, when the nation manifests such a rebellious, defiant spirit? These northerners have so completely transferred their devotion to idols that there is little hope of saving them. No sooner are they through with one form of dissipation than they turn to another, while their rulers exult in their shame. Yea, and already they are in the power of the Assyrian tempest which shall rudely awaken them to a sense of their heinous apostasy.

Personal arraignment of the priests and princes (5 : 1-7a).

Hear, O priests and princes of Israel! your condemnation. You, who should be the shepherds of this people, for the sake of your own profit have lured them on to their ruin by encouraging them in the lewd practices, which are observed in connection with such sanctuaries as Mizpah and Tabor. The gross crime of this nation has made return to Jehovah impossible, for they are but the expression of the low state of morality which prevails, and which indicates that the people possess no real knowledge of Jehovah's character and demands. Israel and Judah both shall fall under their load of guilt. Vainly do they outwardly worship him with their ceremonial offerings, while their deeds reveal only treachery.

Prediction of speedy destruction because of the crimes and political mistakes of Israel's rulers (5 : 7b-14).

Any month the foreign invader may swoop down upon you. Already, in imagination, I can hear the dread alarm announcing his approach. From the heights let the trumpet blast resound, calling the people to the defense of their homes. Vain, however, shall be their efforts, for the overthrow of the northern kingdom is determined. Jehovah will execute dire vengeance upon these despicable cheats, who rule over this wilful and foolish nation, oppressing their subjects and perverting judgment. Indeed, he has already begun to destroy from within both the kingdoms of the north and of the south. The short-sighted politicians of Israel, recognizing the internal weakness of their state, have sent their

ambassadors to the land of the Tigris in the wild hope of gaining health and healing from that beast of prey, the Assyrian king. Bitterly shall they be disappointed. Jehovah himself will pitilessly complete the judgment upon Israel and Judah which he has begun, and no human power can hinder him.

2. *The Fitful Repentance of the Israelites Belied by their Hideous Crimes* (5 : 15 to 7 : 16)

As Jehovah has so often declared by his prophets, the one hope of deliverance is through repentance. Until he sees evidence of genuine contrition he will leave the Israelites to their fate.

True repentance alone will save (5 : 15).

Let the people not deceive themselves by thinking that all that is necessary is merely to come to Jehovah with the formulas of repentance upon their lips, and that he will forthwith avert his judgment and cure all their ills. The spirit of their prayers reflects a fundamental ignorance, both of the nature of repentance and of the character of Jehovah. The Eternal himself is perplexed to know what to make of a people like these ; for their love, which he craves, and which is the only basis for sincere contrition, is like the morning mist, which is quickly dissipated by the rising sun.

Their words lightly spoken, not sufficient (6 : 1-4).

And yet there is no excuse for their ignorance of Jehovah's demands, for he has taught them his will forcibly

The true evidences of repentance not ceremonial offerings but loving service (6 : 5, 6).

and often by the mouth of his prophets, and by his unmistakable judgments, impressing upon them the eternal truth that what he pre-eminently desires is not merely formal service, but, glowing within their hearts and prompting each action, a warm love for him and for their fellow-men. It is far more pleasing to him that they become acquainted with his will and character than that they conform in the minutest details to the dictates of the ceremonial law.

The horrible crimes, daily committed in Israel, evince no true popular contrition (6 : 7 to 7 : 2).

But when Jehovah looks for the fruits of love, what does he find? Forgetting their peculiar relation to Jehovah, like any heathen nation, they have broken their solemn covenant and betrayed him. Go into any of their cities,—as, for example, Gilead,—and you may see the bloody footprints of the murderer. Assassins lie in wait for their victims ; and, greater horror still ! on the road to Shechem a band of priests are carrying on organized highway robbery. A gross licentiousness also is corrupting all the people of Israel. Thus, when Jehovah would fain heal the ills of this northern kingdom, their crimes of treachery and robbery cry to heaven for vengeance rather than for mercy. He, who sees all, cannot overlook them.

Corruption of the court (7 : 3-7).

Note also the wickedness and the treachery which is openly countenanced in the court. A consuming passion inflames all. You are, alas ! familiar with the

sickening picture of the king, shamelessly holding court attended by drunken, unscrupulous cut-throats, waiting only for a favorable opportunity to murder their royal master, who himself had mounted the throne by the use of the assassin's knife. In all this unholy crew no one has cried earnestly to Jehovah.

Evidences of Israel's decay (7 : 8-16).

Thus the nation under their blind guidance, at the present critical period upon which it has entered, is constantly aping the heathen states about, and trying to save itself by foolish and entangling alliances. The result is that it is indeed a cake unturned. With its nobles at the head of its social organization corrupt and oppressive, the masses beneath defrauded and wronged, its religion outwardly dead ceremonialism, inwardly rotten, its political policy characterized by a long series of blunders, its condition, indeed, is pitiable. In its foreign relations, although not knowing it, Israel has been the loser. Already the signs of premature decay have begun to appear. Instead, however, of turning to Jehovah for help in the time of need, these foolish Israelites, like a silly dove, without any consistent political policy, seek disgraceful alliances, first with Egypt and then with their arch-enemy, Assyria. Jehovah's judgment shall surely overtake them, for their conduct represents open rebellion against him. He would, it is true, have gladly delivered them, had not they proved traitors in all their conduct. Not one cry of

genuine contrition has escaped their lips. Only when famine stares them in the face do they look upward, and then it is to howl for food with which to sate their sensual appetites. Alas! no dependence is to be put upon them. For their insolence their rulers shall fall by the sword, while the Egyptians, their allies, in whom they trust so much, will only jeer at their misfortune.

3. *Israel's Retribution Well Merited, Overwhelming, and Imminent* (8 : 1 to 10 : 15)

Having rejected their opportunities to save themselves, the Israelites shall soon know the woes of conquest (8 : 1-3).

Blow a blast of warning, for the enemy, like an eagle, is even now swooping down upon the land. The impending calamity is no mere chance. It comes because the inhabitants have broken their covenant with Jehovah and rejected his commands. Vainly do they claim that they stand in a peculiarly close relation to him. When they had the opportunity to win his favor, they spurned him who would have saved them in this time of need. Therefore retribution alone awaits them.

Their artificial kings and idols no defense (8 : 4-7).

Following their own rebellious course, they have raised puppets to the throne and called them kings, but without the divine sanction. In the same way, out of their silver and gold they have manufactured idols to be torn down, even as have been their artificial kings. Do you, who worship Jehovah under the symbolism of a calf, know that you only arouse his indignation? Oh! when will

your minds be freed from the thraldom of these degrading superstitions inherited from the less enlightened past? The calf of Samaria is, like the pagan idols, a creation of man's hands. There is nothing divine about it. Like all things human, it shall be broken in fragments in the general destruction which is about to sweep over Israel. Dire shall be the consequence of long years of folly. Completely shall the territory be devastated, for the grain which escapes the blight shall the invader consume.

Evidence of Israel's approaching downfall (8 : 8-10).

The absorption of the northern kingdom by foreign powers has already begun. Its prestige among the nations is gone. Blind to all reason, it has rushed into the hands of the Assyrians and sought to strengthen its weak position by foreign alliances, purchased with heavy gifts. Vain is their attempt to escape Jehovah's judgment and to avert the national captivity which awaits them.[1]

The service at their altars arouses Jehovah's indignation rather than his mercy (8 : 11-14).

Do the Israelites urge that they are serving Jehovah with rich offerings at their many altars? Those services are made merely the occasion for feasting by the altars, while in the sight of God they are but excuses for further sin. Were Jehovah to express his will in the most detailed law they would be utterly ignored by this peo-

[1] Following the Septuagint, which reads "that they may cease for a little from anointing a king," where the Hebrew has "they shall involve themselves with tribute to the king of princes."

ple, who seek only their own pleasure. Their offerings, therefore, far from turning aside his indignation, only intensify the reasons why he must visit upon them the most severe punishment, even exile.

The effects of the coming exile upon their social and religious life (9 : 1-6).

Let not the Israelites celebrate their harvest feasts with the same wild exuberance as do their heathen neighbors ; for every acclamation of thanksgiving to Baal, the Canaanitish god of plenty, which rises from Hebrew lips, is prompted by the basest of motives, and represents gross apostasy from Jehovah. The present is no time for rejoicing, for they are on the point of being driven into exile. What will all this newly gathered grain and wine mean to them when they are carried away into captivity, and forced to eat the unclean food, which is all the heathen lands afford ? Then shall their feasts and ceremonial worship be impossible. Far from the temple of Jehovah, no more shall they partake of the meat sacrificed to their God. All sense of communion with him shall be but a memory of the past, and what they eat shall be eaten in sorrow, and merely to supply their animal needs. In Assyria or among the ancient tombs of Egypt shall they find unhallowed graves, while their beloved land lies desolate.

Signs of the approaching dissolution (9 : 7-9).

Already the Israelites are beginning to reap the consequences of their sins. Into such excesses have they fallen that their prophets have gone mad, so that they

utter no clear message, but only the incoherent muttering of frenzy. The true watchman of Ephraim, like myself, is guarded by his God, and is ever laying bare the faults of this people,[1] whom even the sanctity of the temple does not deter from base acts of treachery. Revolting deeds of lust, such as shocked even the imperfectly developed moral consciousness of the age of the judges, are common occurrences.[2] These crimes shall bring their own punishment.

Magnificent possibilities prodigally squandered through lustful indulgence (9 : 10-17).

In sad contrast with their present fruits was the promise of those earlier days in the wilderness when Jehovah chose the people to be his own. But from the moment that they came into contact with the debasing civilization of Canaan they yielded to the temptation. That process of moral deterioration has gone on until the once virile nation has completely lost its character. Sadder still, sinful indulgence of lust has rendered barren the sacred organs of generation. Even should children

[1] This contrast between the members of the degraded prophetic guilds and the true prophets was frequently drawn. Compare, for example, Micah 3 : 5-8. The passage is so elliptical that the exact meaning is obscure. The literal translation of the Hebrew seems to be, "Ephraim's watchman is with my God; a prophet is a fowler's snare upon all his (Ephraim's) ways." The readings of the A. V. and R. V. are familiar. For still another parallel translation, which, however, does not appear to suit the context as well, compare Smith, "The Book of the Twelve Prophets," I, 280.

[2] Cf. Judges 19 : 22-30

be born, they shall grow up only to meet death by the sword of the conqueror. Northern Israelite though I am, I cannot pray for anything but retributive judgment. Jehovah will not be slow in answering my prayer, for all his love is transformed by their misdeeds into loathing and indignation. Lawless, disobedient vagabonds that they are, he will drive them forth to find a home where they may among the nations.

The hollow insincerity at the bottom of Israel's religious and political life (10 : 1-4).

Richly blessed with natural gifts was the land of Israel ; but its very fertility became a stumbling-block to its inhabitants, leading them to fix their attention upon material things, and causing them to express their religious faith in the heathen symbolism of the Canaanites whom they found in the land. The fundamental error in Israel's religion is the lack of sincerity. Jehovah can do nothing but show his disapproval of it all by overturning their altars and pillars. Already this fickle people, who have no real faith in their God, are also beginning to lose their faith in the king whom they have set up. Therefore the keystone of their political as well as their religious organization is crumbling. As a result, public and private honor is wanting, every one is trying to cheat his neighbor, and consequently the courts are filled with lawsuits.

Far from saving them in the time of their nation's danger, the calf set up by Jeroboam I at that house of

impiety, Bethel shall be a source of keenest anxiety to the people of the district of Samaria, and to the degraded priests of this steer-god, lest the prestige which it has enjoyed be lost. Well do they tremble. To Assyria's warlike monarch shall it be sent, that the gold, with which it is laden, may swell the heavy tribute, while Israel's puppet king shall float helplessly, like driftwood, on the flood which is about to overflow the land. The same wars of invasion shall destroy the idolatrous shrines which have been the centers of Israel's apostasy, and their altars shall lie utterly desolate. Then shall the people long for death to deliver them from their shame and woe.

The impending overthrow of the national religion (10 : 5-8).

Beginning with the disgraceful atrocity at Gibeah, Israel's history has been characterized by a long series of crimes. Worst of all, there has been no moral or religious progress. Jehovah can do nothing with such a people except punish, and the instrument which he shall use will be the armies of the nations. Hitherto he has allowed the burdens of life to rest easily upon the Israelites. Their existence has been one round of festivals. True development, however, comes only through labor. Now these two kingdoms shall experience the harder side of life. In this time of discipline, O fellow Hebrews, is to be found your supreme opportunity. If you faithfully discharge your duties, then shall you enjoy

Whatsoever a nation soweth that shall it also reap (10 : 9-15).

the warmth of Jehovah's love, instead of being smitten by his judgments. By efforts and persistence develop your religious sensibilities, which have been allowed so long to remain latent. There is yet time to win Jehovah's favor, and to save yourselves from your impending fate. Alas there is great need of a change, for hitherto your energies have been directed in quite different channels, and you are reaping the fruits in the calamities which are falling upon you. You must have learned to your sorrow the folly of trusting to crooked diplomacy and military equipment to save you. Soon you shall experience the shock of war, and your fortified cities shall crumble into ruins, as did Beth-arbee, before the army of the conqueror. Thus, O Israelites, in accordance with the eternal laws of God, your nation, with its hypocritical and artificial religion, its corrupt priests and prophets, its idolatrous practices, its gross immorality, its hollow insincerity, and its puppet kings, shall go down to ruin, and its political organization shall disappear like a mist of the morning.

4. *Jehovah's Love and Hopes for Israel* (11 : 1-11)

Hear Jehovah's protestation of his love and care for Israel. In the earliest period of this nation's existence, when it was untrained and in bondage, my heart began to go out toward it in tender love, and I called it from

the thraldom of Egypt to freedom and to sonship. Alas! the more clearly I made my will known by my prophets to these ingrates, the more they failed to do it. Nevertheless I did not lose patience, but, as a father teaches his child to walk, so I tenderly guided them in the path of duty and true development. When they were weary and discouraged, I comforted them, although they were too obtuse to realize that it was I who healed their bruises when they fell. As they took up the sterner duties of life I guided them, not with the whip and lash, as does a cruel driver his yoke of toiling oxen, but with words of encouragement and genuine affection, relieving them as far as possible from the painful strain, and supplying with never-tiring care their every need.

The story of Jehovah's tender care toward ungrateful Israel during the earlier history (11 : 1-4).

But all my efforts have apparently been in vain, for they show no signs of contrition and obedience. Hence discipline is the only alternative. Absorption into the great Assyrian empire shall be their fate. Instead of responding to the calls of my prophets, their whole tendency is away from me and from doing my will. Therefore nothing remains but to let them experience the terrors and the woes of war.

The punishment which Israel's conduct has made necessary in sad contrast to Jehovah's purpose (11 : 5-7).

And yet, O people of my choice, how can I leave you to your fate, richly merited though it is? Must I destroy your cities, as I did those of the plain beside the Salt sea? My heart revolts at the thought. Compassion for

The compassionate longings of the infinite heart of love (11 : 8-10).

you fain would deter me from doing what common justice prompts. Divine mercy and patience as far exceeds the human as infinity exceeds nothingness. Instead, therefore, of coming to consume you entirely, I will continue, even though I must burn out these impure elements, to manifest myself to you as the one ever near and ready to forgive and to save.

Promises of a future restoration (11 : 10-11).

In the distant future, when exile has done its work of discipline, then shall Jehovah send forth a loud summons, calling together his scattered people, and they with eagerness shall come hurrying back from the distant lands where they have found a refuge. Then will Jehovah restore them to their land and home.

5. *Israel's Base Return for Jehovah's Loving Care* (11 : 12 to 12 : 14)

Israel has sought help from every other source than the true one suggested by the example of their ancestor Jacob (11 : 12 to 12 : 6).

Such is Jehovah's feeling and purpose toward Israel, but the people requited his mercy and love with deception and desertion.[1] They have preferred to play with fire by purchasing costly alliance, first with Assyria, and then with Assyria's enemy, Egypt. In so doing they have not only involved themselves in political entanglements, but have also committed sins against Jehovah which will not go long unavenged. Their folly and

[1] Since the references to Judah in the chapter add nothing new to the prophecy, and interrupt the sequence of thought, they have been omitted in the paraphrase.

wickedness is all the greater because they have had before them the familiar example of their honored ancestor Jacob, who, beginning at his birth, ever struggled to secure Jehovah's blessing. He succeeded, as you know, in gaining it in rich measure. O Israelites, if you will only act in accord with the simple dictates of love and of justice, and earnestly seek to win Jehovah's favor, you likewise may yet enjoy his spiritual blessings.

The mercenary aims and corrupt religion have rendered this nation impervious to all moral culture (12 : 7-14).

But no, the one ideal of the Israelites has been material gain, and the pursuit of it has degraded them to a level with these cheating Canaanites. They consider that they have attained their ideal, and in their blind folly think that they have suffered no spiritual loss. Mistaken fools ! Do they not realize that their life has been a complete failure, and that in their moral development they are exactly where they were centuries ago, when they were wandering desert tribes? Therefore Jehovah must cause them to go back to that simple nomadic life, and begin their education over again. This failure is not because he has neglected to send to them faithful prophets, who by forcible illustrations, as well as by spoken words, have striven long and earnestly to instruct them. But it was all in vain, for coupled with their mercenary ideals was their idolatrous religion, blinding them to all truth, and making them

objects worthy of divine wrath.[1] The bitter consequences of their guilt shall be theirs to endure.

6. *The Final Review of Israel's Mistakes and their Inevitable Consequences* (13 : 1-16)

The Idolatry which prevails in Israel the real source of its decay (13 : 1-6).

In the earlier days, Ephraim, the great tribe of the north, was the acknowledged leader of the Hebrew race, but when its religion degenerated into Baalism, its death began. The best energies of the northern kingdom are still being devoted to the construction of idols and the senseless worship of the calves which have been set up at the popular shrines. A nation which is thus decayed at the core cannot survive in these troublesome times. When the Assyrian whirlwind strikes, it shall be scattered like chaff to the four winds. And yet, how different it all might have been ! Egypt and the wilderness wanderings presented greater dangers than the present ; and still, under Jehovah's guidance, they passed through them all in safety. It was the wealth and luxury of Canaan which led them to forget the God in whom they had found an able helper.

Thus, in their time of stress, he who alone can deliver

[1] Verses 12 and 13 interrupt the sequence of the thought, which is continued from verse 11 to verse 14, and, accordingly, have been omitted in the paraphrase. They seem to expand the thought of verse 9, recalling how, in the midst of adversity and danger, Jehovah ever led the ancestors of the Israelites. It is not improbable that the present text has been disarranged

is their fierce antagonist. How powerless are the weak kings whom they set up for Jehovah forthwith to cast down! The present moment might have been one of triumph instead of judgment. But as it is, can Jehovah think for an instant of delivering? Instead, he must stifle all feelings of pity and give over the culpable nation to severest punishment. Drought, conquest, and pitiless war, shall speedily do their cruel work. Before them the strong, the helpless, and the innocent, shall all meet a common death.

The supreme opportunity lost because of the nation's folly (13 : 7-16).

7. *The True Prayer of Repentance and its Answer* (14 : 1-9)

Fallen, sin-stained people, come back, I beseech you, to Jehovah, your only true God. Come, bringing not in your hands sacrifices and burnt offerings, but on your lips true words of contrition. Let your prayer be, "Cleanse us thoroughly from our sins. Accept as our best offering the confessions and faithful vows which we now make. At last we have learned that Assyrian alliances will not save us, nor Egyptian cavalry. No longer will we pay divine homage to the idols which our hands have made. To thy mercy, O thou Father of mercies, we commend ourselves."

What Israel's attitude toward Jehovah should be (14 : 1-3).

Hear the ready response which Jehovah would give to such a prayer: "Although Israel is suffering grievously

The gracious response which Jehovah would make to such a petition (14 : 4-6).

from the effects of long years of sin, I will restore and bestow my love unreservedly upon this repentant people, for it is necessary no longer for me to think of judgment. Under my benign influence their growth, so long arrested by their course of crime, shall proceed rapidly, until they shall stand before the world a powerful and attractive nation.

The joys of repentance and reconciliation (14 : 7, 8).

"Then will those who live under its banners enjoy prosperity and a glorious development. Then will Israel recognize the folly of worshiping idols, and I in turn will freely forgive and care for the repentant nation. At last Israel will realize and confess that its true growth and prosperity come from me, who am the eternal source of all life and growth."

The Epilogue (14 : 9).

[Whoever is quick to perceive and appropriate truth will find in these obscure prophecies rich and eternal messages, illustrating above all the great fact that Jehovah's demands are altogether just, and that, for those who conform to them, life is easy; but, for those who refuse to comply, it is beset with insuperable difficulties.]

THE EARLIER PROPHETIC ACTIVITY OF ISAIAH

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I

THE YOUNG PROPHET OF JERUSALEM

While Amos and Hosea were executing in the northern kingdom the mission with which God had entrusted them, a youth was approaching manhood in the city of Jerusalem who was rarely qualified in personal endowment and by favoring conditions to enter upon a similar work in Judah, and to carry it to a higher stage of development. The peer of these men of God in loyalty, devotion, and courage, he was so situated that a much wider sphere of service was open to him. If not related to the royal family, he was at least of gentle blood, and entitled by general consent to a place of dignity and influence at the court and among the people. During his whole career he played the part of a leader in political as well as religious and social affairs. As a loyal citizen of Jerusalem, he was peculiarly fitted to perceive and express the important relation of the holy city to the plan of God, unfolding for the nation. That his natural abilities were of no ordinary character is

proved by the dignity, vigor, and beauty which characterize all his utterances. It is entirely probable, however, that he availed himself of all the educational resources of a brilliant era.

His boyhood was during a happy period of Judah's history, when the energetic and enterprising Uzziah was on the throne of Judah. This king, enthroned when but a youth, enabled his people to recover speedily from the depression to which the stubborn conceit of his father Amaziah (2 Kings 14 : 8-14) had reduced them. With skill and judgment he developed Judah's natural resources, strengthened her defenses, and opened many avenues of wealth. He compelled the petty nations round about to resume their old relation as tributaries. He even won back the port of Elath, on the eastern arm of the Red Sea, secured a navy of "ships of Tarshish" (Isa. 2 : 16), and resumed the traffic with South Arabia which Solomon had fostered. He thus made his little kingdom secure, powerful, and prosperous, and gave his people renewed confidence in themselves and in their future. Judah, under King Uzziah, became a fair counterpart of Israel under King Jeroboam II, whose reign was practically contemporaneous. No wonder that the soul of the young Judean prophet was stirred by the sight of evils similar to those which had kindled the prophetic ardor of Amos,—a thoughtless greed for

wealth, a consequent abuse of power and opportunity, a forgetfulness of moral standards, all combined with a scrupulousness for religious forms and with a pretense of loyalty to Jehovah,—and that his study of the utterances of Amos and Hosea to the northern people prepared him for a prompt consecration of himself as God's spokesman to the people of Judah.

By his own statement (Isa. 6 : 1) the prophet lets us know that it was in the year of King Uzziah's death that he began his public career. He then definitely recognized the duty imposed upon him by his divine sovereign. He was then a young man, but probably married. He was not immature nor lacking in prestige. On the contrary, his earliest utterances breathe the same serene and thoughtful confidence, and exhibit all the characteristic qualities, which we find in the impassioned addresses of forty years later. His growth during these years was not so much an advancement in social position nor oratorical skill, nor even in fundamental ideas, as in his grasp of all the factors which were to be combined to carry out the divine plan, and in his emphasis of those which were of supreme importance. During the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, the prophet was a prominent factor in the affairs of Judah, recognized, although sometimes opposed, by both king and people. He applied the touchstone of Jehovah's approval to

their pursuits and plans. Like his prophetic predecessors, he rebuked the ungodliness made manifest in the superstition, formalism, and self-esteem of the people of Judah, and denounced the social evils which were spreading among them. He advanced beyond Amos or Hosea in his application of the principles of prophecy to national questions. Partly, perhaps, because of his intimacy with those who ruled the state, partly because of his habit of mind, he was a statesman as well as a reformer. He constantly urged a national policy based upon the will of Jehovah. He thus restored the advisory function of the prophet of Jehovah, so honored in the life of Elisha, and gave it a broader definition in the light of the higher prophetic ideals of his own age. He was more, however, than reformer or statesman. That which gave him power in either capacity, and transformed his utterances from nothing more than a skilful exhibition of rhetorical power into stirring and searching appeals to conscience, was his wonderful grasp of the nature and purposes of God, and his insistence upon the recognition of God in every act of man. From his inaugural vision of Jehovah he was a student of the divine nature, plan, and methods, transmitting to his disciples a well-ordered survey of the relations of God, man, and the universe, which is entitled to recognition as the first true theology which we can trace.

It would be impossible for the student of prophecy to understand the life and work of this uncrowned king of men by reading the Book of Isaiah in the present order of chapters. When his utterances were first reduced to written form,—in part, perhaps, by the great teacher himself, in part by his disciples,—they circulated among the faithful in Israel in more or less fragmentary form. Disciples here and there made collections of these published prophecies, arranging them in little groups, each bearing on a special theme. It thus happened that when the Isaianic writings were all gathered into one roll by some one who probably lived long after the prophet had passed away, their order was distinctively topical. Chapters 1 to 12, for instance, form a little volume of discourses of very different dates on Judah and Jerusalem. Chapters 13 to 27 seem to have been grouped together because they deal with various foreign nations. The historical student of to-day is forced to ignore the present order of chapters or discourses altogether. Nor does he seek to arrange them in the probable order of composition. It is not unlikely that the sixth chapter, which relates the inaugural vision of the prophet, was written many years after the actual experience, yet the one who seeks to reproduce and interpret the prophet's career will study it first of all. Similarly, the first chapter, which to-day makes a force-

ful introduction to the book of Isaiah's prophecies, was possibly written almost forty years after the opening of his ministry. It is a capital *résumé* of the earlier work of the prophet, and can best be treated as such.

Under the generally acknowledged principle that the prophecies can most helpfully be read and studied in connection with the historical period to which each one refers, a number of chapters in the Book of Isaiah are at once relegated to the time of the Babylonian exile or later. Whether the prophet Isaiah uttered these predictions, or some one else, does not affect this necessity for studying them in connection with the history of the exile and the return. Only then do they become intelligible and convey to our minds the impression intended by him who produced them. In accordance with this principle, not only do we omit from present consideration chapters 40 to 66, but also chapters 13 and 14, 24 to 27, and, with less assurance, chapters 21, 34, and 35. The remaining thirty chapters can be arranged with considerable certainty into two groups of prophecies which relate to events during the actual lifetime of the prophet.

The public career of Isaiah was not less than forty years in length. The year 701 B. C. is the last year which we can definitely determine. It would seem incredible that even sixty-six chapters should represent

the intense activity of those years, did we not remember that a paragraph or chapter often summarizes in briefest possible form the leading ideas of a year or more of active ministry. From the material preserved to us we might infer that his busiest years were at the opening and at the close of his prophetic life, for the greater number of these chapters belong to the years 739 to 732, and 705 to 701 B. C.

The first group includes about fourteen chapters, and reflects the earlier activity of Isaiah down to the fall of the northern kingdom (722 B. C.), a period of seventeen or eighteen years. From the standpoint of prophetic biography these chapters are full of interest. Aside from the story of his consecration to his exalted office, they reproduce his earliest ministry, when his message was of judgment upon the ungodliness and crime prevailing in Judah,—a message parallel in many respects to those of Amos and Hosea, and doubtless inspired in part by them. About 735 B. C. came the crisis which gave occasion for his first appearance as a political adviser. The weak and timid King Ahaz, being besieged in his own capital by the allied armies of the kings of Northern Israel and Syria, secretly meditated a deliverance by becoming a vassal of the all-powerful king of Assyria, the famous Tiglath-pileser. The prophet appealed in vain to prince and people to show their trust

in Jehovah by relying upon him alone in their emergency, and rejecting all temporary expedients for safety. Disappointing as his failure was, it had important results, which affected the methods and principles of his subsequent ministry. The most obvious consequence was also, in all probability, the most important. Since the nation as such would not heed his message, he seems to have retired from public activity and given himself to the instruction of such kindred spirits as he could gather round him. Thus the ten years of comparative silence which followed were, after all, years of most influential service, and the period as a whole was an essential preparation for the outwardly more glorious achievements of later years.

Our study of the life and teachings of the prophet as portrayed in his own utterances will naturally commence with his reminiscences of that solemn hour when his Lord was first revealed as a king, who called for a messenger to men, and accepted him.

II

ISAIAH'S CALL TO SERVICE (6)

The vision in the temple (6 : 1-3).

Just after the death of my once-revered sovereign, Uzziah, while meditating in the temple on the outlook before my beloved people, I suddenly found myself

standing in the very presence of Jehovah, enthroned in majesty, his ample robes seeming to fill the space before me. Around him stood a retinue of heavenly beings, veiling in deep reverence their faces and forms, while they joined in continual praise of his holiness, power, and glory.

His confession of sin and forgiveness (6 : 4-7).

My first impression was one of fear. The thresholds trembled at the sound of their voices ; before my profane eyes a protecting veil of mist arose. I longed to unite my praises with those of the heavenly choir, but a sense of my unworthiness checked me, and I said : "Alas ! I dare not take the holy name upon my lips, for this vision of my heavenly sovereign reveals to me my own sin and that of my people." No sooner had I uttered this confession than I was given a glad assurance of forgiveness and atonement. A seraph touched my lips with a glowing coal from the altar, assuring me that they were now cleansed. At once I seemed to hear Jehovah saying, "Who will be our messenger to men ?" and with joy I offered myself for the service. Then he uttered this depressing word : "I appoint you, indeed, to declare my will to this people. Do not overestimate, however, the effect of your preaching. The great mass of your countrymen will refuse to listen to you. Nay, the more earnestly you plead, the more will their obstinacy deaden their capacity to receive spiritual impres-

His call (6 : 8-9a).

The effect of his preaching upon his obdurate countrymen (6 : 9b-13a).

sions. Your work will seem disheartening and fruitless." Appalled by this prospect, I said : "Surely, O Jehovah ! there will be a limit to this stubborn unbelief ;" but in reply I received a message which wrung my heart : "Not until Jehovah's desolating judgment of war and captivity has been enforced against this sinful land. Even when only a tenth of the people remains, the judgment must be repeated, until nothing is left of the stately tree of Judah but an unsightly stump." One blessed ray of hope was given me : "As the stump of the oak tree retains its vitality and sends up shoots, which form a new tree, so will it be with Judah. The faithful servants of Jehovah, though few in number, will survive the judgment, and grow again into a people fitted to carry out God's great plan."

A ray of hope (6 : 13b).

III

PROPHECIES OF JUDGMENT UPON JUDAH FOR THE SINS OF THE NATION

1. *Sermons about Jerusalem from Jehovah's Point of View* (2 to 4)

Popular expectations regarding the future glory of Jerusalem (2 : 2-4).

Not long after Jehovah had called me to his service, as I was thinking of his plans for my people there came to my mind the well-known prediction that Mt. Zion, the site of the beautiful temple of Jehovah, will

yet become the most conspicuous mountain in the world, so that all nations will eagerly flock thither to be taught true views regarding God and life. Their disputes will then be settled by Jehovah's just arbitrament. Since all necessity for war will cease, their weapons will be fashioned into implements of agriculture.

Why Jehovah cannot fulfil such pleasing hopes (2 : 5-9).

As I repeated in public this glorious hope, I could but add, "O house of Jacob, does not such a destiny impel us so to serve our God that we may be found worthy to fulfil it? For let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that Jehovah is ready to use us, sinners that we are. He must sorely discipline his beloved people, for they no longer trust in him. Sorcerers and soothsayers and strangers are their friends. They gloat over their accumulating wealth and resources. They have even filled the city with idols made by themselves. Every one of them deserves a humiliating retribution for his forgetfulness of God ; they are beyond forgiveness.

The "Day of Jehovah," a day of humiliation for mere earthly pride (2 : 10-17).

You boast, O my people, of what will happen on Jehovah's day. Alas ! his coming in majesty will be a day of terror and humiliation to you. Everything that seems to exalt itself or minister to human pride shall be brought low, for at all costs Jehovah will maintain his supremacy. He alone will be exalted.

The idols, so carefully made of costly material, will be cast aside when Jehovah reveals his majestic presence in

And a day when idolatry will be overthrown (2 : 18-21).

the earthquake. You will try to hide away from him in the recesses of the rocks. How puny human power will then seem to be; how useless such hand-made gods!

The complete collapse of social order in Judah certain (3 : 1-7).

In the year that the boy king, Ahaz, ascended the throne, I made known to Judah the catastrophe to be expected. "Jehovah will remove all who contribute to the order and stability of society. Weak and capricious rulers shall have supreme power. All discipline or government will come to an end. In vain will you entreat the one remaining householder to assume authority over his fellows. You will all be driven to utter despair."

Because of the just judgment of Jehovah upon her wicked rulers (3 : 8-12).

The reason for this certain ruin is the flagrant wickedness carried on so openly by those who should be the protectors and exemplars of virtue. They cannot complain if their own evil doings bring evil upon themselves. O my people, your leaders are misleaders; they only make you go astray. When Jehovah calls his

He will vindicate the oppressed (3 : 13-15).

people before him for judgment, he will reckon with these cruel and selfish rulers, who neglect all interests but their own.

The fate of the haughty and luxurious ladies of Jerusalem (3 : 16 to 4 : 1).

At another time Jehovah bade me announce that his righteous judgment would not fail to descend upon the proud and vain ladies of Jerusalem, whose luxuries gave excuse for the exactions of their husbands. Theirs shall be a terrible fate. Those who are now so haughty and

coquettish will be stripped of their bewildering attire, exposed to shame, and treated as wretched captives of war, while the holy city will be disconsolate because of the loss of her brave defenders. So few will be spared that the women in that day will crowd around each survivor and plead for marriage, that they may be spared the reproach of childlessness.

The Jerusalem in which Jehovah will delight to dwell (4 : 2-6).

[[1] When the desolating judgment has been completed, the land will become abundantly fertile. The few who are left to enjoy it, because predestined to life in the holy city, will be truly holy, for Jehovah himself will thoroughly purify them. Over the city will hover his protecting presence, even as he once manifested himself to his people in the desert. He will also protect his favorite dwelling-place from the scorching heat of midday and from the driving storm. His constant presence will make it a paradise.]

2. *Judah the Unfruitful Vineyard of Jehovah* (5 : 1-24)

The song of the vineyard and its application (5 : 1-7).

Determined to bring home to my countrymen their unfaithfulness to God, I offered one day to sing a melodious song about a friend of mine who owned a vineyard :

[1] It is thought by many scholars that this paragraph formed no part of the spoken message of the prophet at this particular epoch, but was added as a suitable conclusion at the time when the separate sermons of chapters 2 to 4 were gathered into their present literary form.

A vineyard belongs to my friend,
On a hill that is fruitful and sunny ;
He digged it and cleared it of stones,
And planted there vines that are choice.
A tower he built in the midst,
And hewed therein also a wine-vat ;
And he looked to find grapes that are good.
Alas ! it bore grapes that are wild.[1]

I appealed to my auditors : "Ye men of Judah, yourselves judge. Has this vineyard fulfilled my reasonable expectations ? Am I not amply justified in laying it waste and giving it no further care ?" At their ready assent I exclaimed, "O men of Judah, you have condemned yourselves. You are the plantation on which Jehovah has lavished his affectionate care. He expected you to set an example of justice, but there is nothing to be seen but bloodshed ; he looked for righteousness, but he hears the bitter outcry of the oppressed."[2]

Judah's wild grapes,—the greed for landed estates (5 : 8-10).

Do you indignantly deny my charge ? Then let me show you the evils that are sapping the moral life of this nation. See the cruel greed for vast estates that incites the wealthy to unjustly add to their possessions until a few of them possess the whole land. Woe to them ! Jehovah himself hath revealed to me that depopulation and barrenness shall be the sequel.

[1] The version is that of Professor Cheyne.

[2] The contrasts are heightened, in the Hebrew, by striking similarities of sound in the words.

Excessive drunkenness (5 : 11-17).

Again God's curse is upon those nobles who spend day and night in reckless dissipation, too engrossed with the pleasures of the table to give attention to Jehovah's interests. Alas ! not these alone, but the many who unthinkingly follow them, will have to suffer the distress of captives. Nay, Sheol shall engulf in oblivion all their pomp and glory. Where once was a beautiful city flocks shall peacefully graze ; for at all costs Jehovah will compel his people to recognize him as the righteous and holy One.

Defiant skepticism (5 : 18, 19).

Woe again to those who are so deliberate and persistent in doing evil that they even dare to defy Jehovah's judgment, announced through his servants, until it overtakes them ! Their very attachment to their sin is a bond which fetters them for the inevitable judgment.

Sophistry and egoism (5 : 20, 21).

Jehovah cannot look with favor upon those who, for their own profit, juggle with moral distinctions that abuses may flourish, nor upon those self-complacent men of influence who will take no heed of prudent counsel. The just God cannot approve of those on thrones of judgment whose only ambition is to be praised for their ability in drinking and their skill in producing drinks, while officially they accept bribes to acquit the guilty and condemn the innocent.

Judicial corruption (5 : 22, 23).

O my people, these sins are ruining our beloved na-

The conclusion (5 : 24).

tion. As swiftly as fire devours stubble, or as hay shrivels in the flame, will it lose strength and life ; for its citizens will not listen to the warning voice of their King and Lord.

3. *Israel's Ripeness for Judgment, a Warning* (9 : 8 to 10 : 4 ; 5 : 25-30)

Israel's disregard of divine warnings (9 : 8-12).

Jehovah has often spoken to his people of Samaria by providential dealings which they should have recognized and interpreted as warnings. But in their self-confidence and bravado they simply boast that they can repair all their losses to their own advantage, wholly ignoring Jehovah's purpose. He it was who stirred up their fierce eastern foes, the Syrians, and their Philistine enemies on the west, so that repeatedly the strength of their land was broken. Yet, since there was no repentance, Jehovah's menacing attitude had still to be maintained.

The sudden calamity which overtook it (9 : 13-17).

Upon these obstinate people Jehovah brought an overwhelming calamity. He suddenly caused the leaders, great and small, true and false, to perish. They amply deserved this fate, for they misled and ruined their people. The whole nation shared in their corruption. God could spare neither the strong nor the helpless. And even then he was forced to continue his judgments.

For wickedness, which Jehovah permits to have its way, is as unquenchable and destructive as a forest fire. A condition of anarchy arose at once in Israel. Faction fought with faction, all ties of kindred being forgotten in the mad strife. The only bond of unity was a common hatred of Judah. But not even this has sufficed to open their eyes. The horrors of internal anarchy (9 : 18-21).

Woe to those men who use their power to cover, by the forms of justice, the most grievous wrongs against the poor and helpless! What will such do in the day of reckoning, when Jehovah summons the invader from afar? Of what use then will be their ill-gotten wealth? Nothing can they do but burrow for safety beneath the corpses on the battle-field. Even this sweeping judgment will not satisfy Jehovah's sense of justice. A day of reckoning coming for corrupt judges (10 : 1-4).

[1] Nor did the earthquake avail. Jehovah raised his hand, the mountains shook, the dead were like offal in the streets, yet the warning was unheeded. The earthquake (5 : 25).

So Jehovah will have to signal to a distant but well-known nation, summoning it to be his agent of retribution upon his stubborn people. Tireless and vigilant, perfectly appointed for war, its weapons ready for use, its horses and chariots prepared for action, swiftly will it God's distant instrument of judgment (5 : 26-30).

[1] The proper position of this verse, which seems to be all that is left of a stanza of equal length with the four preceding ones, is a matter of much dispute among scholars.

come, and will take possession of the land as a lion seizes its prey. Its onset will be irresistible, and nothing shall escape its grasp. With the rush and roar of a tidal wave, these dread foes shall sweep over the country, leaving only ruin and distress behind them.

IV

INCIDENTS AND SERMONS RELATING TO THE WAR OF SYRIA AND ISRAEL AGAINST JUDAH

1. *The Situation* (7 : 1, 2)

In the closing days of Jotham's reign over Judah (2 Kings 15 : 37), Rezon, the king of Syria, and Pekah, the king of Israel, made an alliance, and declared war against Judah, in order to force her to unite with them in resisting the future advances of the aggressive king of Assyria. Chapter 17 : 1-11 was probably uttered by Isaiah in view of the alliance before active hostilities had been begun against Judah. The accession of young Ahaz to the throne of Judah may have been coincident with the first attack of the allies. They met with considerable success, yet Ahaz would not yield. The two kings determined, therefore, to capture Jerusalem by assault, put an end to the Davidic dynasty, and set an adventurer on the throne of Judah (Isa. 7 : 6). This

greater danger produced a panic in Jerusalem. Ahaz did not fail to look to his defenses ; but he resolved to save his throne by declaring himself a vassal of Assyria, and imploring the protection of his more distant foe. To people as well as prince this seemed a judicious step to take in the circumstances. While it was being considered, the prophet Isaiah came forward to urge a policy of conduct more befitting a nation whose God was Jehovah of Hosts.

2. *The Speedy Ruin of Syria and Israel* (17 : 1-11)

The approaching fate of Damascus (17 : 1-3).

O men of Judah, are you dismayed to hear that Syria and Israel have made an alliance? Alas that it should be true ! Unhappy Ephraim will bitterly regret her forgetfulness of Jehovah and her friendship with the idolatries of Damascus. Nor will it avail her politically. Damascus will soon be an utter ruin. Where once were populous cities there will be only a lonely pasturage for flocks. The kingdom, so long a protecting bulwark of Israel against all northern foes, shall cease to be.

A similar judgment to be executed upon Israel (17 : 4-6).

But Jehovah plans that Israel too shall speedily lose all that has made the nation renowned and wealthy. She shall be enfeebled as if by a wasting disease, her people cut off as grain is gathered by the sturdy reaper, and a mere remnant left, like the meager leavings of an olive-picker.

The salutary effect in promoting the worship of Jehovah (17 : 7-11).

The effect of this will be that men will recognize the divine author of life, Israel's Holy One, and will cease to reverence idolatrous emblems and altars. Your devastation, O Israel, as complete as that which befell the inhabitants of Canaan at the hands of your forefathers, is wholly due to your forgetfulness of God, your only source of strength. The pains you take in the worship of the Syrian Adonis are utterly futile ; your only reward will be incurable distress.

3. *Faith, not Fear, the True Motive for Judah's King* (7 : 3-17)

Why Isaiah sought an interview with king Ahaz (7 : 3).

When Judah's affairs seemed to be coming to a crisis, Jehovah directed me to take my little son "Remnant Shall Turn," whose name was a constant reminder to all the people both of the coming judgment which God had bade me announce so often and of the hope which he would also extend under certain conditions, and go to meet the king near the end of the aqueduct of the upper pool, where he was anxiously inspecting the water supply of the city in anticipation of the coming siege. My message was one of comfort and encouragement. "Be prudent, O king ; commit yourself to no rash policy. Do not fear these menacing foes. Their show of strength is but the last flicker of two expiring torches. Surely you are not afraid of that usurper, Pekah, who

His encouraging message (7 : 4-9).

has incited Israel to make this attack, nor of his ally, Rezon. It is Jehovah's will that their plans shall fail. Who are these champions in comparison with him![1] Let your policy be dictated by faith, and not by fear. Without faith[2] in God's word, uttered through me, there is no security for you."

The king's face betrayed his unwillingness to respond to my appeal. Evidently he had formed some plan of action to which he and his advisers were committed. He was not ready to approve of an attitude of defensive neutrality, supported by a steady confidence in God's protection. So Jehovah led me to continue my message. "Do you hesitate, O king, to place implicit trust in Jehovah, your God? Let him convince you by a sign that I am speaking in his name. Ask any sign you choose in the whole realm of creation." Unwilling to commit himself, the king replied, evasively, "God forbid that I should put Jehovah to the proof," whereupon, indignant at such hypocritical indifference to God's appeal through me, I said: "Listen to me, all ye whom Jehovah appointed to rule and lead this nation. Is it so small a matter to ignore the thoughtful advice

The king's unwillingness to receive it (7 : 10).

An assuring sign offered and refused (7 : 11, 12).

The sign of the boy Immanuel (7 : 13-17).

[1] Verse 8 *b* is generally regarded as an insertion, not a part of Isaiah's real address at this time.

[2] There is a play on words here. "Without *belief* there will be no *relief*."

of your faithful subjects that you delight in despising Jehovah's counsel as well? He will give you a sign. A young woman shall bear a son who shall truly represent the hopes we have inherited from the days of David. His very name, 'God-is-with-us,' shall express the secret of his power. Through your obstinate folly he shall receive but a sorry inheritance. His youth shall be spent amidst privations, his food being only curds and wild honey; for while he is yet young the lands of Syria and Israel shall be ravaged, and the very power on which you rely for deliverance from this present danger shall be the means of inflicting upon Judah such a blow as it has not known since the days of the great disruption.

4. *The Certain Consequences of the Pro-Assyrian Policy* (7 : 18-25)

Judah will be invaded by both Egypt and Assyria (7 : 18-20).

At various times thereafter I set forth to my people the inevitable results of the determination of Ahaz to enter into alliance with Assyria. "It can but result in drawing us, as well as our neighbors, into the struggle which Egypt and Assyria, in God's providence, will soon begin. Their armies, like swarms of insects in number, shall penetrate into every obscure corner and hiding-place of our land. The very force which Ahaz has

bribed to rid us of our enemies Jehovah will employ to lay bare and humiliate his own people.

"So complete will be the ruin that the few remaining domestic animals will have free range, and from their yield of milk the sparse population will get the curds which, with wild honey, will be their only food. All the choice vineyards, so prized by Judeans, will give place to thorny thickets, where hunters will seek their game, or to pasturage for cattle and sheep."

All Judah will be turned into pasture land (7 : 21-25).

5. *A Vain Appeal from King to People* (8 : 1-18)

Since the king and his advisers would pay no heed to my suggestion of the only policy worthy of a nation whose God was Jehovah, I was moved to take steps to impress upon the people the uselessness of their panic. I inscribed upon a huge tablet, in plain letters, the suggestive words "HASTEN-SPOIL-SPEED-PREY," and fastened it where all the people could see, securing two reliable witnesses of my act. Some time later another son was born to me. Acting still under divine direction, I gave him this same name, explaining it to mean that before long Damascus and Samaria would be captured and plundered by the Assyrian king.

The public tablet (8 : 1, 2).

The name of his second son and its meaning (8 : 3, 4).

But the faith of the populace was no sturdier than that of their king. The danger from a visible foe seemed far more substantial to them than the promises of an unseen

The Assyrian ally to become an invader (8 : 5-8).

God. So this message came to me : "Since this people despise the gently flowing water of Shiloah, fitting type of God's unobtrusive but beneficent presence in our midst, and are faint-hearted at the sight of Rezon, Jehovah must give them a needed lesson. The Assyrians, to whom you wish to appeal, will advance like the flooded Euphrates, inundating not only Israel, but also Judah, all but engulfing this land, carrying destruction to every quarter of even Immanuel's land.

Although a people of faith might bid him defiance (8 : 9-10).

"Let that name be our inspiring watchword. God's presence is indeed with us. We might defy the peoples gathered from the ends of the earth to serve under Assyria's standard if our faith is strong. Their destructive plans can be frustrated with ease, since God is in our midst."

Isaiah's certainty that his advice was of God (8 : 11-15).

While under the immediate influence of God, in a state of prophetic ecstasy, I received this warning against the impulses of the hour : "With bated breath your countrymen are discussing the schemes of Rezon and Pekah. Do not share their absurd terrors, but revere Jehovah as the great central factor of human life. To those who trust him, he, the Rock, will be an altar of refuge ; to those who ignore his mercy, a stumbling-block and trap."

Alas ! as Jehovah predicted when he called me to his service, I have not been able to draw this people close

to God. They have not listened to my appeals. God counsels me to write these down and commit them to my little circle of faithful disciples. This done, I will wait patiently until by their fulfilment Jehovah vindicates his messenger. Meanwhile, I and my children, our very names recalling constantly the messages I have uttered of judgment, promise, and power, shall be living witnesses to my people of Jehovah's presence and purpose.

His retirement from public life to await the fulfilment of his predictions (8 : 16-18).

6. *Jehovah's Controversy with his People—a Retrospect* (1 : 2-31)

Let all creation listen and shudder while I recount how Jehovah has been forced to charge his people with rebellion. They are less grateful and responsive to him than an ox or an ass to its owner. So utterly corrupt are they that they hate Jehovah for his very holiness, and refuse to worship him to whom they owe their existence as a nation.

The nation's ingratitude toward Jehovah (1 : 2-4).

Why lay yourselves open to further punishment by your continued apostasy? You are bruised and mangled from head to foot,—a mass of festering sores, left without attention. Our land is a desert, ravaged by foreign troops, as desolate as the site of ancient Sodom.[1] Jerusalem is yet spared, but is as isolated as a watcher's

Resulting in sweeping calamity (1 : 5-9).

[1] This alteration of the text is supported by many scholars. It then becomes a familiar simile.

booth in a large vineyard or cucumber-field, or as a city closely besieged. Only Jehovah's mercy has prevented our utter destruction.

Not costly rites but active righteousness is what God desires (1 : 10-17).

Do you think to keep Jehovah's favor by a lavish use of sacrifices, O wicked people! Listen to divine instruction. Your costly and constant offerings of various kinds I do not wish. Your coming into my presence is a mere form, your mechanical performance of your religious duties a desecration. Every one of your gifts is detestable to me, your presence at sacred seasons unendurable, for you bring iniquity with you. Even your prayers are offensive and useless, for your uplifted hands betray stains of blood. Cleanse yourselves, put away evil, do deeds of righteousness, give every human being his rights. Then Jehovah can show you favor.

He is willing to pardon all who will obey him (1 : 18-20).

Let us come to a mutual understanding. Do not despair of divine forgiveness. However grossly you have sinned, you can be made free from stain, if you will devote yourselves heartily to Jehovah's service. If you continue to rebel, you must take the awful consequences, for Jehovah's word cannot be broken.

Jerusalem's degeneracy (1 : 21-23).

O my beloved city, must I utter a wail for you as one dead?[1] Instead of being a home for those who practice righteousness, you shelter offenders against God's right-

[1] A thought cleverly expressed in the Hebrew by putting verse 21 into elegiac meter.

eous law. Nothing real and genuine is left. Your princes have no principle.[1] They connive at extortion, and neglect the cause of those who cannot bribe them.

Jehovah's purpose to restore her (1 : 24-26).

Therefore the Lord Jehovah, the defender of Israel's true interests, having discovered that Jerusalem's real adversaries are her own wicked people, will purge away these evil-doers, and restore to authority true rulers who have her best interests at heart. Thus the city, as of old, shall become a stronghold of righteousness.

By this righteous judgment God shall redeem his city and those faithful ones who turn to him repentant, but the rebellious he will destroy. At that time, all remaining confidence in sacred trees or other emblems of nature worship shall disappear, for superstition will be as dead as a sapless oak or a waterless garden. It will destroy itself unheeded.

7. *The Bright Future for those who Trust in God* (8 : 19 to 9 : 7)

The despair and distress of the God-forsaken people (8 : 19-22).

During the dark days which followed the events already described, God gave me this message for my faithful disciples. "When the people in defiant despair urge you to have recourse to necromancers and wizards, be bold to point out to them the disloyalty and folly of

[1] This chapter is full of similar plays on words, which cannot be rendered.

such action. They will then remember my teachings, although it will be too late to profit by them. Wandering through the land, discouraged and faint with hunger, they will be goaded to fury by their sufferings. In whatever direction they look for help, no ray of hope will brighten the gloom. But for those who know Jehovah's purpose, and can trust him, a brighter prospect dawns. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali, already feeling the depressing humiliation and hopeless prospect of a captive land, shall be the first to see the light of the new day. All shall share in the blessing ; there shall be no bounds to their joy, for the galling dominion of Assyria shall be suddenly broken. Yes, every relic of the armies which trample on the liberties of Canaan, and drench its soil with blood, shall be given to the flames in anticipation of the glorious reign of our deliverer. He shall be born to rule and lead this people, and, in grateful recognition of his character and deeds, his people shall name him, because of his wisdom, 'Wonderful Counselor ;' because of his strength, 'Hero-God ;' because of his constant care of his people, 'Father of Eternity,' and, to describe the nature and effects of his rule, 'Prince of Peace.' His authority will be everywhere recognized, and his reign profoundly peaceful, for he will establish his throne forever by the exercise of justice and righteous-

A gleam of hope (9 : 1).

The sure deliverance from the dominion of Assyria (9 : 2-5).

The deliverer,—the Prince of Peace (9 : 6, 7).

ness. Do you question this promise? Jehovah's honor is pledged to its performance."

V

A PROPHECY REGARDING PHŒNICIA (23 : 1-18)

When Shalmaneser IV, about 725 B. C., was laying siege to Tyre, the prophet uttered this message concerning that city of merchants: "Mourn, O homeward bound merchantmen, over the disaster reported to you at Cyprus. The harbors are closed against you. Phœnicia, so long enriched by traffic, whose harvest-fields were in Egypt, is helpless. The lonely sea will not acknowledge her children nourished on her bosom. Egypt herself shall be seized with a panic.

The coming downfall of Tyre (23 : 1-5).

"O Tyrians, make haste to flee to distant Tarshish. Tyre is no longer the happy, enterprising city of olden times, the maker of kings, the home of merchants as honored as princes. Jehovah has humiliated her because her greatness was never ascribed to him, the true Source of all.

Because Jehovah purposes to humiliate her (23 : 6-9).

"It will be useless to escape, for Jehovah's power can reach over the sea. Neither in her colonies nor in Cyprus will the fugitives from the ruined city find a resting-place. The recent ruthless spoliation of Chaldea by the Assyrian takes away her hope of deliverance.

She will have no chance to escape (23 : 10-14).

Tyre's future service for Jehovah (23 : 15-18).

"For many years—the length of a dynasty—Tyre shall be in oblivion. Then she will sing the well-known harlot's ballad :

Take thy lute and go about the city,
Harlot, forgotten now by men !
Play thou with skill, sing many a ditty
To win remembrance then.[1]

Thus regaining her traffic with mankind, she shall consecrate her gains to Jehovah and to the use of his faithful servants."

[1] Cheyne's version.

THE MESSAGE OF MICAH

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I

THE PEASANT PROPHET OF JUDAH

While the prophet Isaiah was studying his country's need from the point of view of a broad-minded statesman conversant with her ambitions and in close touch with her leaders, there arose in the obscure village of Moresheth, near the border of Philistia, a man of God who surveyed the tendencies and dangers of the time from the standpoint of a man of the people. Realizing even more keenly than his aristocratic colleague the bitter and heartless tyranny of the upper classes, Micah proposed a more drastic requital. In his earliest prophecies, when he probably was yet a young man, and before he had gained his broadest outlook, his message of judgment was as unreserved as that of Amos. It is an interesting illustration of the fact that God gradually revealed his purposes even to his servants the prophets, to note that, while Micah, viewing only the immediate situation, affirmed in a way that carried conviction to the heart of his hearers[1] the certain ruin of Jerusalem,

[1] Compare with Micah 3 : 12 the explanation in Jer. 26 : 17-19.

Isaiah, his thoughts directed to the plans of Jehovah for his people, affirmed with equal confidence that Jerusalem was secure from hostile attack. Each was a true prophet, but not a prophet of the whole truth.

The conditions of Judah, when Micah first began to prophesy, were, indeed, such as to stir a prophet's soul. If Hezekiah ascended the throne about 727 B. C. he had not been reigning long. Isaiah's work as a social reformer had met with scant success. Unable even to prevent Ahaz and the people from entering into alliance with Tiglath-pileser, he had, in the main, given himself for the last dozen years to the instruction of his disciples. The social wrongs, which he had first attacked, became more and more marked. Misuse of power, indifference to the claims of human brotherhood, and wanton luxury, characterized the daily life of the city. To Micah, the villager, the unjust treatment of the helpless poor by men of wealth and power is the sin that cries aloud to heaven. He has but little to say about idolatry or display or immorality.

Were the first three chapters all we have of Micah's utterances, it would be easy to draw the prophet's portrait. He would be much like Amos—brusk, earnest, eloquent,—a rugged, simple, clear-eyed messenger of judgment. So strongly marked are these characteristics that some scholars are inclined to deny that chapters

4-7 are from Micah. When we recognize, however, the probability that Micah and Isaiah would become known to each other, and that the younger prophet would gradually come into sympathy with the broader and more spiritual tone of his predecessors, especially of Hosea, it is no longer difficult to understand his change of tone and outlook. While it is not likely that such different messages as those of chapters 1-3 and chapters 4-5, would be uttered in direct succession, it is wholly probable that they would spring from the varied prospect of two distinct periods of his life.

The Book of Micah represents utterances of very different dates. Chapters 1-3 can be dated with reasonable assurance not far from 722 B. C., since the first chapter represents the fall of Samaria as either imminent or recent, while the other two supplement and explain the first. Verses 12 and 13 of chapter 2 are evidently out of place. They are a fragment of some separate sermon, and break, in their present position, the very close connection of thought. They seem to belong with verses 6 and 7 of chapter 4, which refer to the restoration from exile. Chapters 4 and 5 refer consistently to Judah's future, but are made up from a number of separate prophecies. If they were gathered up by Micah himself, they probably represent sermons delivered not far from 701 B. C. Chapter 6 is not easily dated. By many it is

referred to the reign of Manasseh, but the grounds for the judgment are very slight. It may quite as well be earlier. The first six verses of chapter 7 reflect a condition of persecution which can hardly be earlier than Manasseh's time. The remainder of the chapter can hardly have been put together earlier than the close of the exile. It is usually considered a late appendix to Micah's prophecies.

The prophecies of Micah are remarkable for independence of thought, and for beauty and force of expression. Like Amos, he is a peasant only in his surroundings and his point of view ; he is a master of artistic and effective rhetoric. His use of paranomasia is unique, and his reminiscences of earlier prophetic writings unobtrusive. If it is safe, with the majority of students of his writings, to consider that the bulk of this book can be ascribed to him, it follows that he was fully worthy of a place by the side of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. Unsparing in criticism when plain speech was needed, he could discriminate. Beginning as a prophet of judgment, he became a prophet of restoration, of divine forgiveness, and of Israel's future glory. No man of God in the days before the exile did more than Micah to give his people confidence in the gracious purpose and the loving care of Jehovah.

As he came to maturity in his village home, he could

look across the busy Philistine plain and observe the currents of commerce and war which flowed from the coast region toward Jerusalem. With his keen appreciation of the abnormal social conditions in Judah, and his grasp of the true ideals of Jehovah, and his acquaintance with the movements of the day, we can understand why he felt sure that the time had come to utter a warning message to his countrymen before it should be too late to save their land from God's invading army.

II

JEHOVAH'S CERTAIN JUDGMENT AGAINST SAMARIA AND JUDAH (1 : 2-16)

The whole earth summoned to witness Jehovah's self-manifestation (1 : 2-4).

Listen, O nations of the earth, Jehovah of Israel summons you to witness his dealings with the people of his choice, in order that you may understand his providential purpose for the world. He is about to manifest himself in judgment, coming from his dwelling-place on high. His pathway is the tempest. Beneath his tread the very mountains are dissolved, as wax melts before a fervent heat, and the valleys are rent in every direction, like water dashed over a precipice.

He comes to punish the sins of his own chosen people, who deliberately ignore his will. They cannot escape

The sins of Israel and Judah the cause (1 : 5).

responsibility ; for the capital cities, Samaria and Jerusalem, which should be centers of moral stimulus and religious instruction for each portion of our nation, are but sources of corruption and ungodliness.[1]

The sweeping judgment against Samaria (1 : 6, 7).

This is the reason for Samaria's sad overthrow. The proud city, a "watch-tower" for strength, far famed for beauty, shall become a lonely mound, with its sloping sides turned into a vineyard. The huge stones of her costly palaces shall fill the valley below, while the foundations lie exposed to wind and weather. The idols in which she trusted shall be shattered, their costly offerings and adornments destroyed by fire. These treasures, earned through her shameful unfaithfulness to Jehovah, her true lord and husband, shall be devoted by her conquerors to their deities.

The same fate threatens Jerusalem (1 : 8, 9).

When the significance of this judgment comes over me, I am in despair. No ordinary symbol of grief expresses my emotion. I could walk about like a captive, barefooted and scantily attired. I could rival the jackal or the ostrich in their distressing cries, for Samaria's punishment is but an index of a wickedness in which she does not stand alone. The blow that falls upon her must fall on Judah too ; it will be felt in Jerusalem itself.

[1] In verse 5 the reading "sins," instead of "high places," is made probable, not merely by the ancient versions, but by regard for parallelism and context.

I seem to see a conquering army making its way toward the capital. What distress it will bring upon the border villages! In their names[1] I can trace omens of disaster, woe, and despair. Let not Gath (Tell-town) spread abroad the dreadful news. You who live in Accho (Weep-town), restrain your tears; in Beth-le-Aphrah (House of Dust), cover yourself with dust in token of your grief and disgrace. O lady of Shaphir (Beauty-town), pass along in the captive train exposed to shame. The citizen of Saanan (March-town) will not come forth to fight, for Beth-ezel's (Neighbor-town) lamentation will fill you with despair. The inhabitress of Maroth (Bitternesses) cannot contain herself because of her anxiety, as she hopes for a good fortune which will never come; for Jehovah will bring the evil to the very gates of Jerusalem, and none shall escape. Yoke the chariot to the steed (*rekesh*), for your time of reckoning has now come, O dwellers in Lachish, who have so often tempted Judah to traffic with Egypt, and to trust in her aid instead of that of Jehovah. To Moresheth[2]-Gath,

Its approach from the sea-coast to Jerusalem will bring woe to many a Judean community (1: 10-16).

[1] This paragraph contains a remarkable series of paranomasias or plays upon the names of villages, some not to be identified to-day, supposably in the track of the invader. These puns cannot be imitated in English with success. Some depend on the sense, some on sound. The text requires some emendation, but the general meaning is quite clear.

[2] The play here is probably with the similarly sounding word *meoresheth*, which means "the betrothed one."

O Judah, you will have to give a marriage portion as she is dragged away by the conqueror. The resistance of the warriors of Achzib to the enemy will be as disappointing to the rulers of Judah as a dried-up watercourse[1] to the thirsty traveler. To thee, O inhabitress of Maresha (Possession), I shall bring one who will make thee his possession ; to Adullam[2] shall come for refuge the nobles in whom Judah takes delight. Alas ! O mother Judah, make manifest your deep grief, for your beloved children are destined to captivity in a distant land.

III

THE FLAGRANT CRIMES OF JUDAH'S LEADERS (2 : 1-11 ; 3 : 1-12)

1. *The Sins of the Wealthy and Powerful* (2 : 1-11)

The greed of the landed proprietors (2 : 1, 2).

Woe to those men of wealth so covetous of great estates that even in the hours devoted to sleep they are planning evil measures against the hapless peasantry, which at daybreak they carry out with a merciless exercise of force. Whatever they desire they seize, whether land or houses. No scruples restrain them, but, by

[1] The Hebrew reads, "the houses of Achzib shall be an *achzab*."
[2] The word "Adullam" suggests "ad ullam," *to their yoke*.

fraud and violence, they crush and ruin the freeholders of Judah.

The message of Jehovah to a nation which permits such brutal tyranny is clear. He promises that he too will plan an evil, the issue of which you shall not control. It will be a distressing captivity, preceded by the loss of all this property which you have wrongfully acquired. In the day of your humiliation, your own lamentation will be echoed in mockery by your brutal captors : Their punishment will be in kind (2 : 3-5).

"My people's property one measureth off with the surveyor's line,
And none giveth it back;
To our captors one divideth our fields,
We be utterly spoiled." [1]

Moreover, the land you thus lose will never be restored to you in the year of general redistribution. By bringing on the nation's destruction, you have made this impossible.

Do I hear you exclaiming, in angry repudiation of my charge : "Cease this constant prating about us and our affairs. You utter nothing but reproaches. What is the justification [2] for pronouncing such a sentence? Are we not sons of Jacob? Has Jehovah become unable to Their protest against such charges (2 : 6, 7).

[1] A rearrangement of an obscure passage, following the Septuagint, which at least suggests the elegiac meter.

[2] An uncertain interpretation. Some expositors take verse 7 with what follows.

fulfil his promises? Are we not doing our duty by him as upright citizens?''

The prophet's rejoinder (2 : 8-10).

Ah, hypocrites, what sort of uprightness do you show? You[1] are the foes of God's people, committing all manner of outrage upon the peaceful and defenseless, regarding them as prey, even separating mothers from their children, and selling each into hopeless slavery in a foreign land. Begone to your justly deserved exile! Such outrageous deeds defile the land, which should be holy. It is no resting-place for such as you. Your iniquity invites only God's destructive judgment.

The secret of their obtuseness (2 : 11).

It is easy to understand your moral obtuseness. You accept as divine only what you wish to hear. One who predicts for you fleshly gratifications you welcome with enthusiasm as Jehovah's prophet; one who utters warnings for repentance and reform you ignore.

2. *The Sins of the Magistrates and Leaders* (3 : 1-12)

The magistrates plunder the people (3 : 1-4).

O ye that rule this people of Judah, who have the power to promote their highest interests, to whom they look for just judgment, how utterly you misuse your authority! Far from being defenders of the right, you exult in oppressive and unjust deeds. You flay your helpless victims as cruel conquerors treat their captives;

[1] Adopting a reliable emendation, which reads, "But ye to my people are," etc.

you devour them like cannibals. You are entirely forgetful of your duties ; you think only of yourselves. But in the day when Jehovah manifests himself to give to every one his just deserts, he will be deaf to your agonized appeal for mercy.

The prophets are mercenary (3 : 5-7).

Jehovah has a message too for the prophets who abet such wrong-doing. As long as their mouths are kept full they predict prosperity and happiness for their patrons ; against those who refuse to bribe them they encourage all manner of opposition. They are utterly selfish and mercenary. "Such insincerity will destroy your moral vision. God's messages you will be unable to read. That great day shall be for you a day of humiliation and mourning, for every one will know that Jehovah repudiates you as his representatives." To me, however, his true servant, he will give power from on high, and wisdom and courage, that I may be able to declare to my people their unfaithfulness to God, and to demand repentance and reform.

The true prophet contrasted (3 : 8).

The leaders are so hopelessly corrupt that judgment seems sure (3 : 9-12).

O rulers of Judah, among whom justice is divided, and that which is straightforward made crooked, who use your legal authority to commit judicial murders in order that you may acquire the means for building stately palaces, you magistrates and priests and prophets, who do your duty only when bribed, and lend yourselves to any injustice, do you now dare to claim Jehovah's sanction

and protecting presence? Can you not see that no city, however sacred in name, can stand on such foundations? This is Jehovah's message to you: "If you do not amend your evil-doings,[1] so sweeping a destruction shall come upon Jerusalem that all signs of habitation will disappear. A part may be cleared for cultivation, a part will lie in ruins. The temple mountain will be as forsaken as a hill in the midst of a forest."

IV

VISIONS OF THE TRIUMPHANT FUTURE FOR THE JEWISH RACE RESTORED FROM EXILE (4, 5)

The future supremacy of Zion (4 : 1-4).

Recall, O my people, the beautiful forecast of Zion's service to God and the world which many of you cherish. In the distant future the temple mount shall be exalted above all the earth, every nation shall acknowledge Jehovah's law. From every quarter they shall flock to Jerusalem to be instructed in the true principles and practices of religion. Warfare will then come to an end, for even the most distant nations will accept Jehovah's arbitration in their disputes. The weapons of war will be converted into implements of husbandry, the science of warfare will be forgotten, men shall everywhere dwell in secure possession of their property.

[1] The reference to this prediction in Jeremiah 26 : 17-19 shows that it was to be interpreted as conditional.

Alas! as yet this is but a vision of what is to be. Now every nation has its own god, which it acknowledges ; but we will both now and evermore be faithful to Jehovah.

The contrast of the present time (4 : 5).

In that future day Jehovah promises that he will gather together the crippled and scattered exiles. He will heal and forgive them, and build them up into the mighty nation of his purpose, and over them he shall reign in Jerusalem forever.

After exile the "remnant" shall become a powerful nation (4 : 6, 7).

"O Israel," he has promised, "I will surely gather together my scattered people. They shall assemble, a great multitude. From their prison shall the barrier-breaker deliver them. They shall force their way through the gates and follow their lord and king, Jehovah, who will lead the van, as in the days of yore.

Its deliverance from captivity (2 : 12, 13).

But thou, O Jerusalem, strong in thy defenses, yet standing in the land as solitary as a shepherd's watch-tower on the frontier, do not lose heart entirely. The Davidic kingdom shall recover its ancient glory, but not immediately. I perceive a time of deep distress and anguish, ending in captivity. This is but the just retribution for your iniquities. Expelled from the city, camping in the open field, carried off captive [even to Babylon], you will be rescued by Jehovah and delivered from the power of your foes.

The Davidic restoration must be preceded by a distressing captivity (4 : 8-10).

The hour of Zion's triumph (4 : 11-13).

The time will come when the nations which now attack Judah with scornful confidence, insulting both her and her sovereign Lord, shall find that they are but sheaves for Zion to thresh. At Jehovah's summons she will tread this human harvest, devoting to her Lord the yield thereof.

The insulted nation will be delivered by the shepherd Prince of Peace (5 : 1-5a).

Again the invading army assembles to besiege Jerusalem, the city is hemmed in, its ruler utterly helpless, and exposed[1] to gross insult. Over against this picture of what we may at present expect, I place the appearance of the promised King, the second David, destined to come from the obscure village of Bethlehem, and yet to be heir of Israel's past glory. [Not until Immanuel appears (Isaiah 7 : 14) and the exiles of Israel are gathered shall this be].[2] Born among the people, he will watch over them like a faithful shepherd, ministering to their needs and proving their sufficient defense because Jehovah's strength and majesty are his. His dominion will reach unto the ends of the earth, he will be the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9 : 6).

The destruction of Assyria's power (5 : 5b-6).

When the Assyrian then ventures to invade our land, there will be no lack of brave defenders. Led by the shepherd prince, these shall shepherd Assyria with the

[1] Another play on words. "With a rod (*shevet*) they smite the judge (*shophet*).

[2] This verse seems to break the close connection between verses 2 and 4.

sword. They shall not only drive the enemy from our borders, but will be able to lay waste their country.

The Jewish race, when redeemed, shall be Jehovah's instrument in dealing with mankind. To some peoples her influence shall be as beneficent as the dew, which is subject to none other than Jehovah's laws ; to other nations, she shall be as fiercely destructive and irresistible as a lion. O Israel, may your hand be strong to cut off all your enemies ?

The "remnant" both beneficent and destructive (5 : 7-9).

In Jehovah's day, he promises that all that has tended to demoralize our nation shall be done away. The agencies of your independence and pride—the war horses and chariots and large cities and strong fortresses—will be completely destroyed. Your sorcerers and diviners will no longer be available. All the symbols of false forms of worship—the idols of metal or stone or wood, the pillars and asherahs—will be removed. And then will he take signal vengeance upon the nations which ignore his sovereignty.

In Jehovah's day all that demoralizes Israel shall cease (5 : 10-15).

V

LATER SERMONS MOURNING JUDAH'S DEGENERACY (6 : 1 to 7 : 6)

1. *The Human and the Divine Conception of True Religion* (6 : 1-8)

The mountains summoned to hear the controversy between Jehovah and his people (6 : 1, 2).

O people of Judah, listen to the word of Jehovah. He summons you to defend yourself against his charges in the presence of the mountains. O everlasting hills and enduring foundations of the earth, as intelligent witnesses, he calls upon you to hear the controversy.

Jehovah's accusation of Israel's ungratefulness (6 : 3-5).

O my people, what complaint have you against me? In what respect have I burdened you? How can you turn away from me without excuse, when you remember how I delivered you from cruel bondage in the land of Egypt, gave you illustrious leaders, brought to nought through Balaam, the seer, the crafty designs of Balak, the Moabitish king, and manifested my righteous and friendly purpose on both sides of the Jordan?[1]

The reply of the conscience-smitten but ignorant people (6 : 6, 7).

O Jehovah, we cannot but admit our guilt, we have forgotten and neglected thee. How can we make our peace! Shall we present ourselves in the temple? Shall we bring more valuable beasts for the burnt offering? Will it please thee if we offer rams by thousands and oil in rivers? Shall we make our last and

[1] "From Shittim unto Gilgal" is regarded by many scholars as a gloss.

costliest gift—our first-born son? Will such devotion win thy blessing and expiate our sin?

The prophet's answer (6 : 8).

O my people, you need not have been in such ignorance of Jehovah's desire. None of these things doth he really require of you. They have no moral value in themselves. What he demands, as an evidence that you desire to serve him, is that you practice strict justice in all your dealings, cherish a spirit of sincere love toward your fellow-men, and obey his revealed will in quiet trustfulness.

2. *Jehovah's Complaint against Jerusalem* (6 : 9-16)

The prophet summons the city to listen (6 : 9).

Hearken, people of Jerusalem, Jehovah has a message to your city. Wise is the man who listens with reverence. Listen, O nation of Judah, and you who are responsible for its well-being.[1]

Jehovah denounces her as a city of false dealing (6 : 10-12).

Can I longer, saith Jehovah, overlook the amassing of wealth by fraud? Can I withhold justly deserved punishment from those who use scant measures and trade with lying scales and weights? The city is given over to evil deeds; her rich men think only of the wrongs they may commit with impunity; her people can utter only lies.

In such circumstances I am forced to do that which

[1] An obscure verse. The emendation would read "Hear ye, O tribe and its assembly (?)"

Her punishment will be a siege (6 : 13-15).

will help you to repent. So grievous is your sin that my judgment must be terrible. An army I will set about the city. You shall suffer the horrors of a siege, the lack of sufficient food, the impossibility of escape, the capture of the property you try to save, and the confiscation of your harvests.

Well deserved because of her attitude (6 : 16).

For your ideals and methods in religious and political affairs are those of the dynasty of Omri. Its sacrifice of all other considerations to its selfish ambition for power and splendor was the secret of its bloody end. Since you have this same ambition, it will just as certainly bring to you overwhelming ruin,—as captives, you will be the butt for the jests of strangers.[1]

3. *The Lament of Righteous Jerusalem* (7 : 1-6)

Her lack of truly righteous citizens (7 : 1-4a).

Alas! I am like a garden after the fruit has been gathered, or a vineyard where only gleanings remain. There is nothing left worth picking. My choicest citizens, the earnest, loyal, generous, and good men in whom I would rejoice, are no more. Every one considers his neighbor as his lawful prey, and hesitates at no crime to gain his end. The leaders of the people conspire together for evil. The best of them are like thorns,—useless except to inflict pain.

[1] With a slight alteration reading, with the Greek version, "nations" for "my people." This gives a natural sense.

The day of reckoning, which thy prophets foresaw, O city, cannot be far distant. It will be a day of dismay and confusion. No one will know whom they can trust. All the usual bonds of friendliness and kinship will go for naught. Not even will one rely on his wife and children.

The prophet's comment (7 : 4b-6).

VI

THE PSALM OF PENITENT ISRAEL (7 : 7-20)

In after years, when the blow that Micah predicted had fallen, when Judah had been taken away to bitter captivity, she recognized that she had suffered for her sins. Then, in deep contrition, she utters these words of penitence and hope.

[I will humbly seek Jehovah, who is my true deliverer. He will surely hearken to my truly penitent prayer. Although my oppressor exults over my destruction as if final, and I seem to be in the darkness of despair, still Jehovah will bring me to the light ; he will manifest again his righteousness by delivering me. Then shall my enemy, who scoffs at Jehovah's power, receive his true deserts.

Israel's confession and hope (7 : 7-10)

On that day of pardon and deliverance, thy ruined walls shall be restored, and thy border broadened.[1]

The prophet's assurance (7 : 11-13).

[1] The Hebrew is a play, "yirhaq hoq."

From every quarter of the earth people shall flock to Judea, for their lands shall be made desolate in the day of retribution.

A prayer for restoration to Judah (7 : 14-17).

O Jehovah, let our prayer come unto thee. Be again our tender shepherd. Let us feed in the rich pastures of Bashan and Gilead, and in the forests of Carmel. Make once more a signal deliverance of thy people from oppression, so that all the nations, humbled and terror-stricken, shall bow in reverence before thy power.

A hymn of praise (7 : 18-20).

What nation worships such a God as thou art, O Jehovah, who punishes in order to redeem and forgive, who takes delight in doing good to men. Our sins thou dost utterly remove from sight. Thou dost fulfil in truth all those promises which thou gavest to our fathers ; for thy faithfulness and thy mercy never fail.]

THE LATER PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH

THE LATER PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH

I

THE TASK OF THE PROPHET DURING THE YEARS 722–700 B.C.

As long as King Ahaz sat upon the throne of Judah, he and his people remained loyal vassals of Assyria. Whether this was due to the shrewdness or to the weakness of the king is uncertain. The situation was not without its advantages politically. Judah was guaranteed security and peace, and could give undivided attention to her own concerns. Consequently the prophet Isaiah, whose patriotism was as unquestioned as his far-sighted judgment, accepted the situation, and did all in his power to maintain it. He did not give up his expectation of a coming judgment upon his people through the very nation which was then its patron; but, in the interest of cultivating a more abiding trust in the Holy One of Israel, the supreme ruler of the universe, he decried all purely human expedients for changing the situation.

The immediate religious results of this submission were deplorable. To the people at large the political supremacy of Assyria implied the superior power of her

gods. King Ahaz not only erected a new altar in the temple patterned after an Assyrian model, but made other changes of similar character, and introduced the Assyrian worship of the heavenly bodies (2 Kings 23 : 12). In this dishonor to Jehovah of Hosts he was heartily supported by many of his influential subjects. As Micah's unsparing criticisms show, the frivolity and superstition of the early days of Ahaz developed rapidly into a deliberate disregard of moral obligations. The rapacious nobles tolerated only those religious advisers who pandered to their desires. Isaiah was for a while comparatively isolated. He got no hearing from king or nobles or people. His attention was devoted mainly to his own disciples. That he did not fail, however, to take advantage of any opportunity to proclaim loyalty to Jehovah and conformity to righteous ideals, is shown by the captious complaint of the revelers, in chapter 28, that his advice was, to say the least, monotonous.

There is no trace of any prominent activity on his part until after the year 715 B. C., when it is certain that Hezekiah was on the throne.[1] The acquiescence of the Judeans in their vassalage to Assyria had been promoted

[1] The date of Hezekiah's accession is an unsolved problem as yet. If the sixteen years ascribed to Ahaz are allowed, it was about 719 (so Cheyne, McCurdy) ; if 2 Kings 18 : 9, 10, is correct, it was 727 or 725 (so Kent, Skinner, G. A. Smith) ; if 2 Kings 18 : 13 is accurate, it was 715 (so Cornill, Kittel, Stade).

by the decisive victories gained by Sargon in 720 over a coalition of northern communities headed by Hamath, and over an Egyptian army at Raphia. But about 716 a new sovereign came to the throne of Egypt. He acknowledged himself Assyria's vassal in 715, but began to use every secret means in his power of arousing a spirit of discontent among the petty states of Palestine. This found expression, about 711 B.C., in the town of Ashdod, which deposed its authorized ruler. But, before the revolt could gain much headway, Sargon despatched a selected body of troops, and quelled the insurrection. Judah, along with Edom and Moab, he suspected of desiring to revolt, but contented himself with receiving their ready submission.

It is probable that Isaiah was responsible for the hesitation of the people of Judah to take part in the revolt. He did his best to show the sure result of such a step by wearing, in public, for several years, a captive's garb. He succeeded in preventing any overt acts of rebellion while Sargon lived. It seems probable, however, that Egyptian intrigue found all this time a ready response in Judah. An anti-Assyrian, pro-Egyptian party grew in strength, which counted as its adherents not a few distinguished courtiers.

The events which gave these conspirators courage for open disaffection were two important changes of dynasty.

The dreaded Sargon died by violence in 705 B. C., and was succeeded by Sennacherib, whose prowess had yet to be proved. At about the same time there came to the over-lordship of Egypt and Ethiopia a remarkably clever and ambitious king, Tirhakah. Despite Isaiah's utmost activity and earnest warnings against the folly and wickedness of trusting in Egypt, active negotiations began between Judah and the other Palestinian states looking toward a combined rebellion against Assyria. King Hezekiah yielded to the popular desire, and became a prominent factor in this league. Isaiah's predictions of what Assyria would do were wholly wasted. In fact, for four years, Sennacherib was forced to give his whole attention to a yet more serious situation in the Far East.

When his people had taken the decisive step of refusing allegiance and tribute, and were face to face with an Assyrian invasion, Isaiah, true to his prophetic function, began at once to strengthen them for the inevitable shock. He aimed to center their hopes upon Jehovah, who, in his providence, was using Assyria as a tool to humble Judah, and cause her to recognize him as her only deliverer. He declared that Jehovah would set certain limits beyond which the boastful Assyrian would not be allowed to pass. Jerusalem, the city of Zion, was still needed for the furtherance of the divine purpose ;

hence Jehovah would protect it. Judah need not fear, if her people would only become truly loyal to him.

In 701 B. C., Sennacherib advanced to punish his rebellious subjects in Palestine, and to quell, once for all, their fondness for revolt. It was the crisis in the history of Judah. How at this time of stress the prophet comforted, warned, encouraged, and taught his people, his own utterances will show. He not only inspired them at critical moments with courage and confidence, but made the apparent hopelessness of the situation a ground for emphasizing Jehovah's world-wide sovereignty and irresistible purpose. When Sennacherib returned to Assyria, leaving Jerusalem untouched, the political deliverance was insignificant in comparison with the triumph achieved for religious progress.

II

ISAIAH'S ACTIVITY DURING SARGON'S REIGN 722–705

1. *The Earlier Events of Hezekiah's Reign*

It is probable that the earlier years of Hezekiah's reign, whether it began in 727 B. C. or later,[1] were years of comparative prosperity. The young king differed

[1] See note, page 134.

greatly from his father, and was undoubtedly a pupil and friend of the prophet Isaiah. One of his earliest official actions seems to have been the public acknowledgment of the nation's fealty to Jehovah. He promoted certain measures of religious reform, and probably encouraged improvements in social administration. His military policy was vigorous and sensible. He was readily acknowledged as leader among the petty rulers of Palestine. He was popular with his people. By exploiting, after the manner of Uzziah, the resources of his country, he was able to pay the annual tribute to Assyria, and still to accumulate no little treasure. Meanwhile, he judiciously strengthened his defenses, probably constructing the conduit (2 Kings 20 : 20), which insured a good supply of water in case of a siege. On the whole, his people were justified in taking heart and renewing their impatience of outside control.

At what period of his life the events related in Isaiah 38 and 39 took place cannot be surely determined, in the absence of certainty regarding the beginning or end of his reign. The sickness of Hezekiah must have preceded by about a year the embassy of Merodach-baladan (Isa. 39 : 1). The latter event almost certainly took place about 714, or about 704 B. C. At both of these times Merodach-baladan was an active enemy of the reigning king of Assyria. Judah was being enticed by

her immediate neighbors to revolt, and was enough of a leader in Southern Palestine to make the flattering advances of the Babylonian far from ridiculous. In view of the fact, however, that Hezekiah seems to have avoided making any treaty, and to have been impressed by Isaiah's point of view, we may relate these incidents as if they happened just before the outbreak in Ashdod, about 712 B. C., which was put down so quickly by Sargon's general.

Hezekiah's sickness and recovery (Isaiah 38 : 1-8, 21. Compare 2 Kings 20 : 1-11).

Hezekiah was taken with an apparently mortal illness. Even the prophet Isaiah believed that it was Jehovah's will that he should die, and advised him to give his last injunctions to his successor. But the good king longed to live, and plead with God for grace. At once the answer came. Before the departing prophet had left the palace he received this comforting message for Hezekiah: "I, the God of thy father David, have listened, and will heal thee. Thou shalt continue to worship me for fifteen years to come, and I will make thy capital secure."[1] At the king's request, this promise was confirmed by a striking sign. A strongly marked shadow falling on the step-clock set up by Ahaz was made to alter its position by ten steps, as if the sun had retreated in the heaven.

This poem of thanksgiving reflects the thoughts of

[1] The first part of verse 6 is probably a gloss, suggested, perhaps, by 37 : 35.

His psalm of thanksgiving: his anguish and despair (38 : 9-14).

Hezekiah when face to face with death. ["Alas! must I be cut off in the prime of life, and go to Sheol, no more to worship God or know mankind. My life is as unstable as a shepherd's tent; it is concluded as quickly as a weaver finishes his task; in a day all is over. I cannot but mourn; I beseech thee, O Jehovah, to redeem me.

"And what can I say of his wonderful deliverance. Help me to make worthy my remaining life. For my welfare was this bitter experience; thou hast delivered and forgiven me. I thank thee that thou dost spare me to live and praise thy name."]

The embassy of Merodach-baladan to Hezekiah (39 : 1, 2).

No sooner had the news of this recovery had time to reach Babylonia than Merodach-baladan, a claimant of the throne of Babylon, and hence a foe to the king of Assyria, to whose authority he would not bow, seized the opportunity to send a formal embassy to Hezekiah to bear a royal gift, and to offer his congratulations. They were given secret instructions to negotiate a treaty with the king of Judah, or at least to stir him to rebellion against the Assyrian king. Flattered by this attention, Hezekiah sought to prove the value of his friendship by exhibiting to the envoys all his royal resources.

Isaiah's reproof and prediction (39 : 3-7.)

The prophet Isaiah, knowing their real motive, questioned the king about them. He answered evasively, but admitted that he had shown them his treasures.

Then the prophet pointed out to him his wickedness and folly, for his willingness to enter into such alliances and his pride in his own resources were directly opposed to a sincere trust in Jehovah. His foolish display of wealth to these distant Babylonians God would punish by a Babylonian invasion.

Hezekiah perceived the weakness of the plan, and resigned himself to Jehovah's will, hoping that peace and stability would at least remain with him. Hezekiah's acquiescence (39 : 8).

2. *Edom's Anxiety and the Judgment upon Arabia* (21 : 11-17)

About the year 711 B. C., when the inhabitants of Ashdod and Gath broke out in open rebellion against Sargon, according to an Assyrian inscription, Edom, Moab, other Philistine cities, and Judah, were also compromised. It was probably at this time that Isaiah uttered these sayings upon the nations which meditated revolt.

Hear the men of Edom[1] asking the prophet whether their troubles will soon be over. By such a riddle as their men of wisdom will understand, the prophet answers that there is mingled hope and despair in prospect. This is all that he can see at present. Edom's query and the prophet's reply (21 : 11, 12).

O men of Tema ! go forth with provisions to succor the caravan of merchants from Dedan, which, avoiding

[1] Dumah may be a sort of anagram for Edom.

The destruction coming upon North Arabia (21 : 13-17).

the armed bands of invaders, is forced to encamp at night in the barren desert. For within a year the tribes of North Arabia, famous though their bowmen be, shall be humbled and almost destroyed.

3. *The Symbolic Prediction of the Captivity of Egypt and Ethiopia* (20 : 1-6)

In the very year that the army sent against Ashdod by Sargon appeared, Jehovah gave me a message against Egypt and Ethiopia. In obedience to his will, I, a noble of the court, had walked the streets of Jerusalem for many months in captive's garb to illustrate the certain result of the popular desire to rebel. Then I was told to say: "This symbolic prophecy has been designed to impress the fact that Egypt and Ethiopia shall be led off into exile to Assyria. What then will be the dismay and terror of the inhabitants of this region when those on whom they are relying for support in their rebellion against their over-lord are so utterly helpless!"

The hapless plight of Palestine's would-be helpers (20 : 1-6).

4. *Moab's Past Calamity soon to be Repeated* (15 : 1 to 16 : 14)

Recall, O men of Judah, the word of prophecy uttered many years ago[1] against Moab.

[1] See 16 : 13. By Hitzig and many interpreters it is thought that this earlier prophecy referred to the subjugation of Moab about 775 B. C., by Jeroboam II. It is notable for its paranomasia (16 cases).

Moab's great calamity (15 : 1-9).

Moab's two chief cities have been captured and destroyed in a night. As the news spreads northward, with bared heads and shorn beards her people crowd around the altars, or throng the roofs and market-places, overcome with grief. Even the warriors are unmanned. Alas for Moab! Her homeless fugitives, spreading the woeful tidings as they go, hasten toward Edom. But even a more terrible fate is in store for the bloody capital.[1]

Her useless appeal to Judah (16 : 1-6).

Send your tribute now to the king of Judah. Plead with him to adopt wise measures to give you protection until the danger is over, offering perpetual submission to the righteous dynasty of David. But Moab cannot be accepted. Her arrogance is too deep-seated.

A vision of her utter ruin (16 : 7-12).

Nothing, then, but sorrow, awaits Moab. Her far-famed vineyards are ruined. All sounds of joy and feasting are stilled. In time the men of Moab will be fully convinced of the uselessness of pleading with Chemosh, their god, for relief.

Her present danger (16 : 13, 14).

This word which Jehovah spake so long ago is applicable to-day. He bids me add that within not more than three years Moab's recovered glory shall become contemptible, and what is left of her people shall be feeble.

[1] Dimon is probably an alteration of Dibon, so as to make a play on the word for blood (*dām*).

5. *The Judgment upon Egypt and its Outcome* (19 : 1-25)

Jehovah's coming judgment will destroy Egypt's independence and fertility (19 : 1-10).

Judgment impends upon Egypt. Jehovah, riding on the swift-flying cloud, is about to cause her idols to quake with terror, and her people to collapse from fear. Vexed by internal anarchy and strife, and at a loss to know what to do, they will resort to sorcery, but without avail. Jehovah will give them up to a cruel foreign conqueror. The great river Nile also shall be dried up, and its branches and canals become shallow and stagnant. The verdure on its banks shall wither, the fishermen, who throve through its bounty, shall mourn, all those whose livelihood depends upon its products shall be sad.

Her wise leaders shall lead her to destruction (19 : 11-15).

A spirit of folly shall seize upon the sages of Egypt, so renowned for their wisdom, and so proud of their descent. The princes of Zoan and Memphis, the bulwarks of the ancient empire, shall, by foolish adventures, lead their people to ruin. In the desperate bewilderment of all classes in the state, the whole body politic shall, like one intoxicated, reel to destruction.

Egypt's future relations with Judah (19 : 16-25).

[1] But in Jehovah's day, when Egypt has distinctly recognized Jehovah's share in this judgment, and stands

[1] Verses 16-25 are in prose, and are regarded by some scholars as an appendix composed by Isaiah at the close of his life, by others as post-exilic.

in such awe of him that she can scarcely endure the mention of Judah, his abode, she will understand and own his grace.

Her five sacred cities, headed by Heliopolis, shall adopt the language of Canaan, and swear allegiance to Jehovah.

Her acceptance of the worship of Jehovah shall be symbolized by an altar in her midst and a pillar on her border. These shall be a token of Jehovah's protection. In time, through many experiences of chastisement and deliverance, her people shall learn to know him truly.

A highway for traffic shall be open through Palestine from Egypt to Assyria, her hereditary foe. The three nations shall form a league for the blessing of the world. Egypt shall be called Jehovah's people, Assyria his handiwork, and Israel his heritage.

III

ISAIAH'S ACTIVITY AT THE TIME OF SENNACHERIB'S INVASION OF PALESTINE

1. *The Death of Sargon and Related Events*

The influence of Isaiah was potent, as long as Sargon lived, to check the plans of the pro-Egyptian party in Judah. Even the short-sighted nobles could realize that

the weak king Shabataka, who had delivered over to Sargon the leader of the revolt at Ashdod, could give them no protection against the invincible Assyrian. His sudden death in 705 B. C. completely changed the situation. In every quarter of his empire great districts rose in revolt. In Palestine plans for united action were at once begun. Perhaps at this juncture should be dated the short but vigorous fragment in chapter 14, which tradition ascribed to the death-year of king Ahaz.[1]

The fate of Philistia compared with that of Judah (14 : 28-32).

O Philistia, do not give yourself up to universal rejoicing because the power from which you have suffered so greatly has been shattered. It will only be exchanged for something just as deadly. Under Jehovah's protection, his own people will be perfectly secure, but thy children will be cut off. Lament aloud, for on your northern border the smoke shall arise from villages aflame, when the serried ranks of Assyrian soldiery approach ! What answer shall we give to Philistia's ambassadors ? "We put our trust in Jehovah, whose purposes for Zion cannot be annulled."

The prophet's influence could no longer prevent open expressions of sympathy with the spirit of revolt. The

[1] Cheyne refers it to the year 719, when Sargon had just received a reverse at the hands of Ummanigas, king of Elam, aided by Merodach-baladan, so serious that he did not venture to attack Babylonia again for eleven years. If 719 was the death-year of Ahaz, this identification would seem very probable.

party which favored an alliance with the other Palestinian states, and with Egypt, led by the astute and ambitious Shebna (22 : 15), gained the upper hand in the council of state. A formal alliance with Tirhakah seemed to give assurance of a successful resistance to any attack from Assyria. Doubtless some time intervened before the decisive steps were taken. The probabilities were discussed again and again. Isaiah's addresses preserved in chapters 28-32 belong to this period. He complained of the secrecy of the negotiations of the conspirators, and of their senseless and wilful disregard of the divine share in Judah's affairs. He argued so powerfully against the folly of trusting in Egypt that he finally won a partial victory. Shebna was removed by king Hezekiah from his position as prime minister, and replaced by Eliakim, who probably represented the political ideas of the prophetic party. The exact date to be given to each utterance is unknown. Probably chapter 28 is as early as 704, while chapters 30, 31, may be dated in the latter part of 702 B.C.

2. *The Plea against the Egyptian Alliance* (28-32; 18; 22 : 15-25)

(1) *A Warning to the Magnates of Jerusalem* (28 : 1-29)

Years ago, just before Samaria's fall, I delivered this prophecy, announcing the fate soon to overtake that city

Samaria's imminent (723 B.C.) destruction (28 : 1-4).

of revelers : "Woe to beautiful Samaria, whose tower-crowned summit and vine-decked slopes remind one of a reveler whose flushed temples are wreathed by a chaplet of flowers ! Her carousal is nearly over. Jehovah is about to send one who, like a destructive tempest or an overwhelming flood, shall sweep over her, dashing to earth her crown of pride. As quickly as one devours an early fig shall the rapacious Assyrian destroy the loveliness of Samaria. In the distant future, however, when Jehovah is the glory of his people, he will not only satisfy their craving for beauty, but will be the source of justice and valor."

Her possible future (28 : 5, 6).

Jerusalem (704 B.C.) no better than Samaria (28 : 7, 8).

Apply this prediction to yourselves, besotted nobles and leaders. Jerusalem to-day is an image of Samaria then. Even priest and prophet are reeling homeward from the sacrificial feast at which they have been plotting treason. When I, making my way into your midst, appealed once more in Jehovah's name for faith in his protecting care and a rejection of entangling alliances,

The peevish complaint of the drunken magnates (28 : 9, 10).

you said, in tipsy derision : "Whom does this fellow presume to teach ? Are we newly weaned infants ? He is forever prattling monotonously his wearisome advice !" [1] Let me warn you that Jehovah, whose servant you are

[1] The Hebrew of verse 10, "çav lā çav, çav lā çav ; qav lā qāv, qav lā qāv ; z'ĕr shām, z'ĕr shām," is an imitation of baby-talk. Some think that the words have no meaning, being merely imitative.

mocking, will teach you through instructors whose words will sound just as intolerable, and whose power will be irresistible.

Isaiah's retort (28 : 11-13).

You rulers who scoff at divine protection, and think by your cunning but faithless diplomacy to save yourselves from destruction, and to prevent the Assyrian army from reaching you, let Jehovah remind you through me that he called our nation for some great purpose, that this purpose is unalterable, and that faith in him is our only safety. Any course of action which does not conform to justice and righteousness will be utterly useless. The judgment shall visit you repeatedly ; you will understand it then only too well. The bed you are making will never fit you. Reluctantly will Jehovah have to carry out his decree of destruction upon his own people, if you persist in your evil course.

Only a policy based upon faith in God can be permanent (28 : 14-22).

Let me utter a parable. Does not the farmer, with a wisdom which Jehovah himself has implanted, cast in the appropriate seed after plowing, and vary his mode of threshing in accordance with the grain ? So Jehovah will deal with his people in the way which is best adapted to their character.

God's methods with men—a parable (28 : 23-29).

(2) *Jehovah's Purpose for Ariel, his Altar-hearth* (29 : 1-24)

Ho ! Ariel, city of David and altar-hearth of God ! let a year or two pass by ; let such feasts as these run

Jerusalem's coming siege and sudden deliverance (29 : 1-8).

their accustomed round.[1] Soon shall the light-hearted people moan and bemoan[2] their fate, for Jerusalem shall be indeed an altar laden with victims. Besieged by a great army, humiliated and almost exhausted, thou shalt suddenly be delivered by Jehovah's power. Thy enemies shall vanish like a dream ; from their visions of spoil they shall be rudely awakened.

Why her people cannot realize the message (29 : 9-16).

Are you dazed by this message, O people? Are your eyes blinded to its significance? Is not Jehovah's word a book which some of you will not read, while others cannot? Your religious attitude is wholly formal ; no wonder that his dealings with you seem so wholly inexplicable. Your self-styled leaders, plotting in secret, seem to actually suppose that they are outwitting God. What stupid perversity !

The future blessings of Israel (29 : 17-24.)

The time will soon come when the land shall be marvelously fruitful, when all shall see and hear Jehovah's will, when the common people shall have much joy, when tyrants and scorners and crafty men shall cease. He who was Abraham's redeemer will not leave Israel to shame and fear. He will so manifest himself that all shall reverently receive instruction concerning him.

[1] This sermon was probably uttered on some great festal occasion.
[2] So Cheyne imitates the two words of similar sound in the Hebrew.

(3) *The Utter Folly of Seeking an Alliance with Egypt* (30 : 1-33)

Egypt is a weak reed to lean upon (30 : 1-7).

Woe to my rebellious sons who are cementing an alliance with Egypt in defiance of my will, seeking the protection of Tirhakah! Although he is active in despatching messengers from one end of his land to the other, yet nothing but shame will come to those who trust in his help. What is the use of sending ambassadors with costly gifts to brave all the dangers of the desert, in order that we may win the aid of such an inefficient people? Egypt's help amounts to nothing; she is Madame Brag-and-stay-at-home.

The sad consequences of the rebellious disposition of the people (30 : 8-17).

Jehovah has bidden me write these prophecies down as a testimonial to the spirit of disobedience shown by my people. They wish to hear only congenial and pleasant oracles. "Do not dwell so much," you say, "upon the Holy One of Israel and what he requires." And now, since you prefer to rely upon your crooked policy, rejecting God's word to you, this wilful sin, of so little moment in your own minds, shall bring disaster just as surely as a bulge caused by a breach in a lofty wall tends toward its sudden and awful collapse. Your destruction will be like that of a potter's vessel,—so shattered that no fragment is found large enough to carry a live coal or hold a sup of water. Have I not repeatedly, in Jehovah's name, urged that, by keeping

aloof from entangling alliances, and by calmly relying upon him, you would show yourselves truly strong? But you reply, "No, we will fly from all danger on the swift horses of Egypt." You shall fly indeed in a panic-stricken mob before a handful of pursuers, until your paltry remnant is left as solitary as a beacon on a hill-top.

The blessings which a timely repentance might entail (30 : 18-26).

Jehovah is waiting to see whether, after all, you will force him to execute judgment ; he is listening for your cry of penitence. Though he may bring you to distress, yet he himself will be your teacher and guide. You will cast away with loathing your costly images. Then he will abundantly bless you with rain and rich crops, and well-fed oxen, and running streams. So bright and joyous will be that happy time that the moon will seem to shine with the brilliance of the sun, and the sun to be sevenfold brighter.

Jehovah must first destroy the Assyrian (30 : 27-33).

Before the glorious prospect can be fulfilled, Jehovah must manifest himself in destructive might against the Assyrian. His aspect will be like a fierce tempest, and his righteous judgment resistless as a torrent, sifting nations like chaff, checking them as with a bridle ; but, while his majestic voice is heard in the thunder and the stroke of his arm in the lightning, there will be a song of rejoicing among you, as at the Passover procession in honor of the Rock of Israel, for your foe he

will destroy. Such a holocaust as he delights in shall be offered. The pyre is deep and wide, and the wood abundant. Jehovah's breath shall kindle it.

(4) *Egypt's Help in Contrast to that of Jehovah* (31 : 1 to 32 : 8)

When, notwithstanding my appeals, the alliance had been made, I uttered this last message : "Woe to those who put their trust in the horses and chariots of Egypt, as if the coming conflict was to be a mere measuring of strength between two empires. They forget Jehovah, and that he is carrying out an unchangeable purpose. If he chooses, both they and their helper shall perish.

Egypt is at best but human (31 : 1-3).

"What a defender he would be ! As undaunted as a lion calmly guarding his prey, though surrounded by a group of shouting shepherds ; as tender and watchful as a tiny mother-bird hovering over her nest.

Jehovah an ideal protector (31 : 4, 5).

"O children of Israel, return to him against whom ye have sinned. As soon as you realize his true character, your hand-made idols of silver and gold will be cast away with contempt. Then you need not fear the Assyrian. Jehovah himself will fight in your behalf, for Jerusalem is his altar-hearth."[1]

He will gladly succor his repentant people (31 : 6-9).

[2][But he will never be contented with merely saving

[1] The word for "fire" in the Hebrew probably suggests the mystic name applied to Jerusalem at the beginning of chapter 29.

[2] Many scholars regard this section as a later appendix, perhaps post-exilic.

Judah under Jehovah's care (32 : 1-8).

this nation from destruction. It will be transformed. Its king shall govern righteously; its officials of state shall give just judgments; every noble shall be a protector and comforter of the needy. Their moral perceptions shall be clear, and their expression of them prompt. The true character of each man shall be recognized. The fool will expose himself by his atheism and his selfishness, and the knave will reveal his knavish[1] tricks and his impositions upon the defenseless poor, while the truly noble man will be known by his noble deeds.]

(5) *A Warning to the Careless Ladies of Jerusalem* (32 : 9-20)

The light-hearted women will mourn over the ravaged land (32 : 9-14).

Self-indulgent women of Jerusalem, careless of stern realities of the present or future, let me tell you that, in a little over a year, you will assume the garb of mourners, wailing for your ravaged vineyards and desolate fields and ruined city. The temple-hill shall become a lurking-place for wild beasts, a pasturage for flocks.

The peaceful future (32 : 15-20).

It is not Jehovah's will, however, that this desolation be made permanent. Under the renewing influence of his spirit, the land shall once more become fertile and its people righteous. They shall rest tranquilly and

[1] The word rendered in A. V., "instruments," sounds very much like the word for "churl."

securely. First there shall be a destructive judgment, then a happy, industrious, and peaceful community.

(6) *A Message to the Ethiopian Ambassadors,—Jehovah can Protect his People* (18 : 1-7)

Not many months passed before the report came to Palestine and Egypt that Sennacherib was collecting a mighty army to chastise us for our rebellion. Tirhakah did not delay to send ambassadors to Hezekiah announcing that his army would be in readiness, and encouraging the king to make a manful resistance. In the very presence of the king and court, I gave them this answer:

The charge to the envoys of Ethiopia (18 : 1-3).

Ah! ambassadors of that distant Ethiopia, where buzzing insects abound, who have come in swift skiffs of reed,[1] depart again to your people, tall and glossy of skin, universally feared, ever victorious, secure in their well-watered land, and say, "O dwellers upon the earth, when you hear the signal for battle, listen." For Jehovah has revealed to me that he is looking on in perfect quiescence, waiting while the Assyrian harvest matures. Just before it is fully ripe, when her plans of conquest seem to be complete, her hosts shall be cut down as branches are cut with knives; their dead bodies shall be left as carrion for unclean beasts and birds. Then Ethiopia shall pay homage to Jehovah on Mount Zion.

Jehovah is merely biding his time (18 : 4-7).

[1] The word "*saying*," inserted in verse 2, should be inserted at the very end of the verse.

(7) *The Downfall of Shebna, the Vizier* (22 : 15-25)

At last my pleadings had effect with the king. He began to have less faith in the alliance with Egypt. I was then directed to denounce his wily chief-minister, Shebna, the leader of those who had intrigued for Egypt, and who had been my constant opponent. Deeming himself secure against all hostility, he had even dared to have a stately sepulchre built on a prominent site near Jerusalem. Going thither, and confronting him, I said :

Shebna to be disgraced, deposed, and banished (22 : 15-19).

"By what right do you, a man of foreign birth, assume to make yourself a sepulchre here? Jehovah will seize you, and carry you away, together with your splendid horses and chariots. You shall be deposed from your office, and Eliakim, one whom God approves,

The promise to Eliakim (22 : 20-23).

will be appointed in your place. He shall administer his trust for the good of his people, and shall have supreme authority, and shall confer honor upon his family. (His whole family, worthy and unworthy, shall be supported by the credit of his name, until by their abuse of trust it no longer supports them.)"

3. *Assurances that Jehovah will Defend his People* (10-12 ; 14 : 24-27 ; 17 : 12-14)

As soon as king Hezekiah, by appointing Shebna to the less important office of secretary, replacing him by Eliakim (36 : 3), had proved his loss of confidence in

the policy of foreign alliance, and his desire to act as befitted one who ruled in the fear of Jehovah, Isaiah began to emphasize the certainty of divine protection. He still assumed that the situation was critical and the national distress acute, but inspired confidence by dwelling upon the impossibility of destruction, because Jehovah is still in need of Zion and all that it represents.

Hezekiah could not withdraw from his relations with the surrounding states of Palestine. The vassal king of Ekron, Padi, dethroned by his revolting subjects, had been sent to Jerusalem for safe keeping. This dangerous commission insured Assyrian attack. With energy and skill he strengthened the defenses of Jerusalem. The inscription of Sennacherib adds that he reinforced the garrison with a force of Arabs and other mercenaries. While these measures were being taken, we may suppose that the following oracles of encouragement were delivered.

(1) *The Certain Overthrow of Assyria, Jehovah's Tool* (10 : 5-34)

Behold the Assyrian, the instrument[1] by which I chastise nations which deserve punishment, commissioning him to conquer and subjugate for me. In his pride he forgets the source of his power, and is only bent on satis-

Jehovah's plan contrasted with Assyria's purpose and claims (10 : 5-11).

[1] The expression "in whose hand" is meaningless, and spoils the parallelism.

fying his own ambition for conquest, saying boastfully, "Am I not invincible? Are not the governors I appoint the equals in authority of any hereditary king? Have I not captured the strongest cities of Syria? If their deities could not save them, shall Jerusalem and her idols escape?"

Jehovah will punish such arrogance (10 : 12).

Such insulting annoyance must be rebuked for the sake of Jehovah's honor. When, therefore, his people have been sufficiently purified by chastisement, Jehovah will suitably punish the Assyrian's pride.

The Assyrian's assertion of strength and wisdom (10 : 13, 14).

Again he ascribes his remarkable success to his own strength and wisdom, ignoring Jehovah's guidance. "Moved by my sagacious insight," he declares, "I change the boundaries of nations, secure their wealth, and remove their inhabitants, terror-stricken, with as much ease as one gathers eggs from an abandoned nest."

He is but a tool (10 : 15).

What an absurd claim that he is his own master! He is only Jehovah's tool! Suppose that an axe or a saw were to boast of its sharpness or strength apart from its user, or that a cane should try to brandish the man who owns it.

The effect of Jehovah's putting forth of power (10 : 16-19).

Jehovah will exhibit his power by stripping the Assyrian of his greatness, so that he shall be as a sick man who has lost his strength. Though his armies may seem as numerous and mighty as a forest, Jehovah's

flame will so consume them in a single day that a child may count those that are left.

Convinced at last of Assyria's true place, the "remnant" of my people shall steadfastly rely upon Jehovah alone; for although, as our fathers said, Israel is to be as numerous as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of this people shall return. Jehovah's righteous judgment is decreed.

The remnant will be steadfastly loyal (10 : 20-23).

So then, O fellow-disciples, do not fear this approaching foe, even though he may treat you as harshly as Pharaoh did your fathers in the land of Egypt. In a little while Jehovah's judgment will be completed by his destruction. He will smite Assyria as Ephraim smote the Midianites at the rock of Oreb. He will overthrow her even as the hosts of Pharaoh were overthrown at the raising of Moses' rod. And then his burdensome tribute and the subjection to his authority shall cease forever.

The disciples therefore need not fear Assyria (10 : 24-27).

He will surely advance upon Jerusalem. I seem to see his rapid and resistless march straight down from the north through the passes of Benjamin.[1] He has reached Ai and passed by Migron. Before he attempts to get

The rapid and resistless advance of the Assyrian toward Jerusalem (10 : 28-32).

[1] The last four words of verse 27, "because of the anointing," make no better sense in the Hebrew than in the English. The text is certainly corrupt. Perhaps it should read, "There cometh up from the north the Destroyer" (Smith), or "He hath come up into Benjamin" (Mitchell).

through the pass of Michmash, he stores his surplus baggage. At Geba he bivouacs for the night. Now the road is easy and short. The inhabitants of Ramah and of Saul's Gibeah flee in terror. O daughter of Gallim, shriek aloud ; listen and fear, O Laishah ; take up the cry, O Anathoth. The inhabitants of Madmenah and Gebim hurriedly gather their possessions for instant flight. He does not halt until, at Nob, he overlooks the city, and brandishes his clenched hand in anger against Mount Zion.

His sudden destruction (10 : 33, 34).

But, just at the moment of his triumph, Jehovah shall strike him down. The lofty Assyrian cedars, like a forest for multitude, shall be cut down by one more majestic still.

(2) *The Messianic Age to Follow Assyria's Downfall* (11 : 1-16)

The royal scion of David's line (11 : 1).

The Assyrian cedar sends forth no shoot from its withered stump, but out of the stock of the almost ruined Davidic family I see a fair and fruitful Branch

His characteristics (11 : 2).

sprouting, an ideal king. By Jehovah himself he shall be endowed with the perfect qualities of a ruler,—wisdom and insight, prudence and heroism, acquaintance

Their practical manifestation (11 : 3-5).

with God's will and a willingness to do it. Taking delight in every manifestation of true character, and endowed with keen discernment, he shall not judge from appearances, nor from testimony, nor will he tolerate

any abuse of justice. The wicked will have cause to fear him, for righteousness shall be his garment.

Then shall begin an era of peace, when even nature will be redeemed, when wild animals will lie peaceably at the side of their natural prey, so docile that they will follow a little child. Side by side will the cow and bear, with their young ones, graze. Even the poisonous serpent will become the harmless playfellow of the child. The spirit that prompts to destruction shall be unknown in Palestine, for every one shall know Jehovah.

The reign of peace (11 : 6-9).

Then shall the whole world give honor to the habitation of the king, for they shall come up to him to receive instruction.

The whole world will seek this king (11 : 10).

[In that day Jehovah shall, for the second time, put forth his power to redeem his people from many different countries, signaling the nations to restore the scattered exiles.

The return of the exiles (11 : 11, 12).

After the restoration, all internal strife between the two kingdoms shall entirely cease. Uniting their forces, the reconciled brethren shall pounce upon the Philistines on the west, and plunder the desert tribes. They shall subdue their neighbor nations, so that by Israel's supremacy the world may be made to serve Jehovah.

Samaria and Judah shall co-operate (11 : 13, 14).

Jehovah shall miraculously prepare a passage-way for the returning exiles from Egypt and Assyria by drying

The miraculous highway for the journey (11 : 15, 16).

up the arm of the Red Sea, and by so dividing up the great Euphrates that one may walk across in sandals.]

(3) *Two Hymns of Thanksgiving* (12 : 1-6)

A song of faith (12 : 1-3).

Then, O redeemed community, you shall sing. "I will praise thee, O God, for now that thy anger is turned thou dost comfort me. God has been my helper ; I will give him my trust. Let us constantly rejoice in his presence."

A song of praise (12 : 4-6).

"Praise Jehovah, hallow his name, magnify him among men. Sound his praise, for he hath wrought wondrous things. Great is he in power and goodness, a friend and protector in your midst."

(4) *Two Fragments concerning Assyria's Destruction* (14 : 24-27; 17 : 12-14)

It is in accordance with Jehovah's world-plan (14 : 24-27).

Surely it is my sworn purpose to break the power of the Assyrian on the hills of Canaan, so as to free my people from this galling tribute and stern authority. I do this in pursuance of my eternal plan for the universe ; it is necessary for the good, not merely of Judah, but of the world. My purpose is fixed ; it cannot be altered.

It will be sudden and complete (17 : 12-14).

Listen to the noise of the advancing hosts of Assyria, recruited from many nations. It is like the roaring of the surging sea. Though they seem like an overwhelming flood, Jehovah will rebuke them with his voice of thunder. They flee, they scatter and perish. At even-

tide all are in fear of them ; before morning they have disappeared. So Jehovah does to those who would plunder his people.

4. *The Crisis at Jerusalem* (22 : 1-14 ; 33 ; 36 ; 37)

Sennacherib, in the year 701 B. C., marched with a huge army to the west. Advancing along the Mediterranean coast, he soon received the submission of half the petty princes of Palestine. Proceeding to Philistia, he captured Ashkelon. Passing on to Ekron, he not only besieged that city, but inflicted a defeat at Eltekeh upon an Egyptian army sent to its relief. Meanwhile a detachment of the army had been despatched to Judah. It was irresistible and destructive. It captured forty-six "cities," a huge body of prisoners, and a vast amount of spoil. Hezekiah was shut up in Jerusalem "like a bird in a cage." At this juncture, overpowered by fear, the king, his people, and his mercenaries, submitted, and sued for pardon. Sennacherib laid upon him a very heavy fine. According to the Assyrian report, he even forced Hezekiah to send some of his own family to the harem of his conqueror. The troops departed. The city, although stripped of its treasures, seemed secure from further danger. A thrill of reckless joy swept over the people. They gave themselves up to unrestricted feasting and merriment. The prophet Isaiah,

2 Kings 18 : 13-16.

however, who felt no sympathy with this outbreak, uttered this warning word :

(1) *Jerusalem's Indifference to God Invites Further Judgment* (22 : 1-14)

The prophet's distress at the popular expressions of joy (22 : 1-4).

What, O citizens, do you mean by this demonstration on the house-tops? Is it a time for joy, when our deliverance has been so ignoble? Your warriors have not been slain in battle, but ignominiously taken prisoners. Alas! I am overcome by inconsolable anguish.

The future day of calamity (22 : 5-7).

For I see still before us a day of tumult and trampling and confusion,[1] when the Assyrian auxiliaries shall lay siege to the city, when your most fertile valleys shall be full of troops.

Their readiness to do anything but trust Jehovah (22 : 8-11).

A while ago, when you realized the defenseless condition of Judah, with what zeal you inspected the armories, carefully examined the defects in the wall of the citadel, arranged for a good water supply, and tore down houses, in order to strengthen the wall! All this you did, but you were regardless of Jehovah's relation to the welfare of the city.

This sin unpardonable (22 : 12-14).

The danger in which we stand should have impelled you all to mourning and fasting and reflection; but what do I see?—riotous mirth and feasting. Truly Jehovah assures me that your sin is inexpiable.

[1] A series of three remarkable assonances in the Hebrew.

(2) *Sennacherib's First Demand—Isaiah's Promise* (36 : 1 to 37 : 8)

Soon after receiving, at Lachish, the submission and tribute of Hezekiah, for some reason, not altogether clear, Sennacherib determined after all to take possession of Jerusalem. He sent several officers with a small army to demand its unconditional surrender. To the Judean representatives the Assyrian spokesman urged that Egypt could not be depended upon, and that Hezekiah had offended his own deities. He also set forth the extreme folly of resisting the demands of a king who was not only powerful, but commissioned by Jehovah, Israel's god. When entreated to discuss the subject in the Aramean tongue, he preferred to make his plea in Hebrew, so that the multitude could understand, and said :

"Listen, O people ; let not Hezekiah persuade you that he or his god can deliver you from our power. Make peaceable submission now, and you shall dwell in peace and safety until we conclude our campaigning, and remove you to a better land. How can you possibly escape? Is there a single country whose god has delivered it from our hand?" The people kept silence, and the representatives of king Hezekiah brought him the words. Dismayed and despairing, he sent a notable deputation to Isaiah, saying, "This is a day of distress and chastisement and rejection. We cannot meet this

crisis by our wisdom. Will not Jehovah rebuke these insolent words by delivering us?"

The prophet replied: "This is Jehovah's message. Ignore these boastful words. Sennacherib shall not harm thee. I will so fill him with a spirit of uneasiness that he shall hear a mere rumor of Tirhakah's approach, and hurry homeward, there to meet with a violent death."

So Hezekiah refused the demand of Sennacherib, and the envoys departed to inform him.

(3) *Jerusalem's Security against the Treacherous Foe* (33 : 1-24)

Woe to the faithless Sennacherib (33 : 1).

Woe to you, O treacherous and aggressive foe, for you shall be paid in kind when your hour cometh!

An appeal to Jehovah (33 : 2-6).

O Jehovah, be thy people's defense and strength. Thou canst readily scatter and spoil our enemies. To fear thee is our true wisdom and a pledge of our deliverance from all evil.

Judah's distressing condition (33 : 7-12).

Behold the warriors of Assyria boasting, our ambassadors in distress, the land laid waste, the perfidious Sennacherib, the disheartened country! What a sad prospect! But Jehovah resolves to assert himself, and scatter these invaders, whose very breathings of passionate vengeance shall be fires to consume them.

Note this act of judgment, you that are far away or near. To those in Zion who have constantly scorned my

teachings, it brings only terror. "How," they exclaim, "can we live in the presence of such a God, who is a consuming fire?" Absolutely secure are the truly righteous in thought, word, and deed. They inhabit a fortress which can never be starved into surrender. The judgment and its diverse effects (33 : 13-16).

In the coming day the King for whom we all are looking shall be seen in his beauty. We shall be reminded by contrast of this time of terror, of how officers exacted the tribute, and of how they surveyed the city. No more will the speech of the fierce invaders grate upon our ears. Jerusalem, the center of our worship, shall be peaceful and unharmed, protected by Jehovah ; for he is our Judge, Lawgiver, and King, and he will be also our Deliverer. Jerusalem has been as helpless as a ship with tacklings loosed, and mast unshipped, and sails unspread ; but soon her people shall seize upon abundant spoil ; even the cripples shall bear their share. There shall be in her no more sickness, for all shall have their sins forgiven. The coming age (33 : 17-24).

(4) *Sennacherib's Second Demand, Hezekiah's Prayer, and Isaiah's Confident Prediction of Jerusalem's Security* (37 : 9-35)

As Isaiah had predicted, the Assyrian monarch soon heard that Tirhakah was advancing against him with a great army. Jerusalem was one of the strongest fortresses in Western Asia. Not wishing to run the risk of

leaving it in his rear, he made one last effort to subdue it by intimidation. A second demand was sent. "Do not be deceived into thinking that your god can deliver you out of my hand. What nation or what king has ever been saved in that way?"

It was a supreme crisis. A refusal to surrender meant a terrible revenge, if the angry king returned.

Hezekiah received the letter, and, taking it to the temple, prayed that Jehovah would hear these reproaches and boasts, and deliver his nation from the Assyrian's clutches for his own name's sake.

Then Isaiah brought to him this word of God: "Hear the answer to your appeal. Jerusalem, undefiled, laughs you, O Assyrian, to scorn;[1] she defies you. Against whom have your reproaches been uttered and your pride expressed, but against Israel's Holy One! When you boast of the ease with which you have triumphed over obstacles of every sort, can it be that you do not know that it was all because I conferred upon you the power? All that you do is under my control. To prove it, I will force you, like an unruly animal, back to your place. This, O Hezekiah, shall be your sign; For two years the

[1] From verses 22-29 the utterance takes the form of a splendid elegy, for example,

"Thee she despises and at thee is mocking—Zion, the virgin!
Behind thee her head she is wagging—the maiden, Jerusalem."

regular operations of agriculture will be suspended, then prosperity will come. The promises that I have so often reiterated shall then be fulfilled. Meanwhile this king shall not besiege the city at all. He shall return as he came; for I will defend Jerusalem for my sake, and in order to fulfil the promises given to David."

(5) *The Final Catastrophe* (37 : 36-38)

While Sennacherib's main army was on the borders of Egypt, a sudden pestilence broke out which caused 185,000 to die in one night. Affrighted by such an evil-omened event, the king withdrew in haste to Assyria, making no further attempt to subdue Jerusalem. Some twenty years later he was murdered, while at worship, by his own sons.

THE MESSAGE OF NAHUM

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I

THE PROPHET OF NINEVEH'S FALL

The prophecy of Nahum the Elkoshite is notable in many ways. It is a poem of great vividness and force; it portrays with the touch of an eye-witness the horrors of offensive warfare in ancient times; it sets forth the consciousness of a nation rather than the counsel of a prophet; it breathes out bitter vengeance rather than hopefulness. Whatever it utters after the manner of the other prophets is a sort of foil which adds to the impressiveness of the denunciations.

Of the author we know practically nothing. Even his name, "Consolation," may be merely a suggestion of the character of his message to Israel. The village, Elkosh, has been variously identified with Al-Kush, somewhat north of the site of ancient Nineveh; with Elkese, a village of Galilee, mentioned by Jerome; and as a village of Southern Judah. The first-mentioned locality is attractive in its suggestion that Nahum was an Israelite, expatriated a century before, but still loyal to

his ancestral ideals, and that, as an eye-witness, he described with faithfulness the closing scenes in the career of fated Nineveh. Much, however, can be urged to break the force of these reasons, and, in fact, the question is unimportant and indeterminable.

The utterances preserved in the Book of Nahum are not easily adjustable to a particular time. They represent the feelings of nearly a century. When Sennacherib, in 701 B. C., suddenly returned to Assyria, he did not leave behind him an independent Judah. Jerusalem was inviolate, but the nation was a vassal, and so remained for three-quarters of a century. The prophecy was not delivered earlier than 660, for Nahum uses as an illustration the case of Thebes (No-amon, 3 : 8), which was captured, in spite of her fancied strength, by Asurbanipal in 663 B. C. On the other hand, it cannot be later than 606, the year of Nineveh's destruction. Between these dates the prophet must have lived. The only clue to the exact date of the predictions is their contents, which describe a hopeless outlook for haughty Nineveh.

Such an outlook could hardly have been imagined before the closing years of Asurbanipal's long (668–625) and brilliant reign. Egypt then successfully revolted. The resolute and hardy mountaineers, the Medes, became dangerous foes. The Scythians swept down from

the distant north, spreading unparalleled desolation through the wide and fertile Mesopotamian plains. While none of these foes ventured to attack the capital city, they robbed it of much of its prestige. When the great king died, his nation came to an end as speedily as did Northern Israel after the death of Jeroboam II. Almost at once, according to Herodotus, the Medes attempted an assault of Nineveh, but were obliged to abandon the attempt because they were summoned back to defend their own homes. Nearly eighteen years later, about 608 B. C., they tried again, and within three years captured the city, and put an end to the Assyrian empire.

It seems probable that the words of Nahum were called forth by one of these two crises. Scholars are fairly divided upon this point. In either case, they were probably antedated by the sermons of Zephaniah; but, since Nahum's theme "expresses the feelings not of this or that decade in Josiah's reign, but the whole volume of hope, wrath, and just passion of vengeance which had been gathering for more than a century, and which at last broke out into exultation when it became certain that Nineveh was falling,"[1] it may with propriety be read in immediate connection with the great crisis in Judah's relation to Assyria.

[1] George Adam Smith, in "The Book of the Twelve," II, 88.

The Book of Nahum contains two prophecies of Nineveh's downfall, introduced by an impressive portrayal of Jehovah's attributes. The attempt has been recently made[1] to show that the introductory portion (1 : 1-15 ; 2 : 2) is, in its present form, a rearrangement of what was originally an alphabetical acrostic poem. This is interesting, if proved to be true. Since, however, the rearrangement did not seriously affect the course of thought, the whole question will be ignored in the paraphrase. It may be added that Nahum delights in imitative words and in paranomasia which baffle reproduction.

Is the short prophecy but a wild cry for vengeance? Must we pity, or honor, a prophet of Israel for giving expression to it? The answer is not difficult when we remember that, to a devout man of Judah, eager to promote God's will as taught by the earlier prophets, Assyria was the one great obstacle in the way. Before Israel could accomplish any service for God, her oppressor must cease. The glow from her burning palaces became the rosy dawn of a new day. From only a superficial point of view was his message one of vengeance. To Judah it carried comfort, encouragement, and confidence.

[1] The work of Gunkel and Bickell is clearly set forth in "The Book of the Twelve," II, 81-84. Their results are accepted in the main by Nowack and Cornill.

II

JEHOVAH'S NATURE A PLEDGE OF HIS VENGEANCE UPON THE WICKED (1 : 1-15 ; 2 : 2)

Jehovah's stern attributes (1 : 2, 3a).

Jehovah is a God of vengeance and a jealous God. He asserts himself in defense of his rightful dignity against those who have long been ill-treating his people. He inflicts deserved chastisement upon those who hinder his righteous purpose. He makes every allowance, he delays his disciplinary action to the very last, but eventually he gives the wicked their deserts.

Their manifestation through nature (1 : 3b-6).

The whirlwind and the storm are tokens of his presence ; he treads upon the darkening clouds. At his voice of thunder the great deep is rolled back, and the rivers made dry. With the hot wind of the desert he parches the most fruitful fields. Terrific earthquakes and trembling mountains are signs of his awe-inspiring presence. Who can brave his just anger in all its fierceness ? It devours like molten lava, which beats down every obstacle in its swift rush.

The completeness of Jehovah's judgments (1 : 7-12).

He protects those who put their trust in him, but overwhelms those who are rebellious,[1] and thrusts them into darkness. What do you think of Jehovah ? He is

[1] Adopting the reading "those who rise up against him" in place of "the place thereof."

thorough-going in his correction. Although his foes are as hard to destroy as a tangled thorn-hedge soaked with moisture, he will devour them as fire consumes dry stubble. Out of thee, O Nineveh, Sennacherib came forth long ago, who defied Jehovah and plotted evil; but, though his foes were like the ocean for multitude and in power, Jehovah would overcome them. He promises to give thee such an affliction that it need not be done a second time.

A promise to Judah of speedy deliverance (1 : 13).

"I am now about to deliver thee, O Judah," saith Jehovah, "from the oppressive yoke of the Assyrian; I will loose thy fetters."

Assyria's sentence (1 : 14).

O Assyria, Jehovah himself commands that your nationality cease, and that your temples, dishonored by the loss of their idols, become your shameful tomb.

Peace and exaltation for Judah (1 : 15; 2 : 2).

Behold, O Judah, your fallen foe! The messenger is hastening with the glad tidings of peace. Hold your feasts of rejoicing and pay your vows, for the enemy shall never again raid through your borders; his end has come. Jehovah will exalt the dignity and strength of Judah to the standard of that of Israel in her best days. The plundering of her choice possessions shall be no more.

III

THE CAPTURE AND PLUNDER OF THE LION'S LAIR (2 : 1, 3-13)

An ironical warning cry to Nineveh (2 : 1).

O Nineveh, your time has come. Your destroyer is in sight. Guard well the fortifications, keep sharp watch of the road by which the enemy advances, gird yourself for bitter, bloody warfare, for the death-struggle is at hand.

Appearance of the invading army (2 : 3).

How brave a show the hostile army[1] makes with the copper-covered shields and scarlet mantles of the warriors, and the dazzling glitter of the chariots, with their burnished plates gleaming as they dash to and fro, while the horsemen prance about, brandishing their long lances.

A skirmish in the suburbs (2 : 4).

In the wide stretches outside the inner walls, the armed chariots meet in deadly conflict; they hurry across the open ground swift as the lightning, glistening in the sunlight as if they were fiery torches.

The hurried but ineffectual preparations for defense (2 : 5).

Now the king bestirs himself, and summons those whom he has honored with rank and authority to the defense. They, half stupefied with debauchery, stumble as best they may to the walls; but it is too late. The battering-ram is in place, its protecting roof shielding it.

[1] Probably referring to the invaders.

The capture of the city (2 : 6, 7). Crash go the iron gates! Those at the royal palace are overwhelmed by terror and despair. Huzzab[1] is discovered, seized, and carried off in shameful guise, while her maidens, mourning like doves, beat their breasts.

The flight of the inhabitants (2 : 8). Through all her history, Nineveh has been like a huge reservoir into which flowed the nations of the earth. But these are not her children, to whom she may look for defense. When the breach is opened, they disappear like the rush of water through a broken dyke. Nothing stops their precipitate flight. Although summoned to make a stand in defense of the city, no one looks back.

The sacking of the city (2 : 9, 10). Now, O invaders, take the vast spoil of silver and gold, treasures without number, heaps of precious articles. There is no limit to them. Alas! great Nineveh is absolutely laid waste.[2] Every survivor is overcome with weakness; their faces are ghastly pale with fear.

To Jehovah is this judgment due (2 : 11-13). Can this trembling city be the lair of the dreaded lion which no one dared molest? He foraged at his pleasure for his whelps, and filled his cave with prey. The explanation is simple. Jehovah has at last determined to bring her to judgment. He will destroy that invincible

[1] An obscure word. It refers probably to the queen.

[2] The remarkable trio of similarly sounding words, "bukah, umebukah, umebullākah," is rendered by G. A. Smith *void and devoid and desolate:* by Ewald, *desert and desolation and devastation;* by Gandell, *sack and sacking and ransacking.*

army, the secret of her power to bully and plunder all nations. No more shall her haughty ambassadors cajole or threaten ; her spoliation is at an end.

IV

THE CERTAINTY OF NINEVEH'S FATE (3 : 1-19)

The well deserved capture of Nineveh, the harlot city (3 : 1-4).

Woe to the city of blood and falsehood and endless robbery ! Her time of reckoning has come. An army is at her gates ! Hear the crack of the charioteer's whip and the rumbling of the wheels, the galloping horses, and the rattle of the chariots bounding along. See the horsemen as they charge, their swords flashing in the air, their polished spears glistening. The contest is fierce, the battle-field a charnel-house, the bodies of the slain heaps over which the victors stumble. And why this carnage? Because she has used her prestige and her charms in alluring and bringing to ruin every nation under heaven. She is a corrupter of the world.

Jehovah will deal with her as she deserves (3 : 5-7).

At last, O Nineveh, you must reckon with Jehovah himself. He will deal with you as pitilessly as your own brutal soldiery has been wont to deal with hapless captives. Since you have delighted to play the harlot, a harlot's punishment shall you have. Shamefully exposed and covered with filth, you shall be pilloried for all to gaze at,—a fate so terrible that many shall shrink

from looking upon you, so well deserved that none shall be found to pity you.

Her defenses will prove useless (3 : 8-13).

Do you listen scornfully to this threat, saying in your heart, "My defenses are secure. Who can capture me by assault?" Are you stronger than the mighty Thebes, the capital of Upper Egypt, situated on the broad Nile, which she considered a sure defense, while Ethiopia and all the provinces of Egypt lent her aid, and Put and the Lybians came to her assistance? Yet, all these availed nothing; she was carried off captive. The cruel Assyrian soldiers massacred her weaker population, while her nobles were laden with fetters and only spared from slaughter that they might become abject slaves. So shall you be drunken with the cup of God's wrath, and be entirely powerless to make a defense. In vain will you seek a safe refuge from your enemy. Your fortresses, apparently so strong, shall be like ripe figs which drop the moment they are touched. Your defenders lose all courage at the news that the entrances to your land have been forced and the fortresses burned.

At the critical moment her defenders will completely fail her (3 : 14-17).

The danger is now at your doors. Make every preparation for defense. Take care that the supply of water is ample; strengthen the defenses. Hasten to tread the clay and mold the bricks to repair all breaches. Put forth your utmost effort. It is of no avail! When you are most active, fire shall consume your palaces, and the

sword your people. However many your numbers, however numerous your traders, they shall depart as quickly as the locust which sheds its skin and flees. Your princes and officers too shall be like the locusts which, though torpid when the day is cold, come to life with the first rays of the brightening sun, and take their rapid flight. So will these worthies seek shelter at their first opportunity.

Your real kings, O Assyria, are long since dead ; your nobles are at rest. All have been slain, your people hopelessly scattered on the mountains. There is no recovery for the nation ; your wound is fatal, your ruin irretrievable. Yet no one will mourn for you. Rather will every man that hears the rumor of your downfall rejoice and exult, for where can one find a people on the earth which has not felt your unceasing brutality !

Her fall irretrievable and unlamented (3 : 18, 19).

THE MESSAGE OF ZEPHANIAH

THE MESSAGE OF ZEPHANIAH

I

THE PROPHET AND HIS SURROUNDINGS

During the closing years of Hezekiah's life, whether they were two or ten, the prophetic party led by Isaiah appears to have had undisputed control in Judah. They carried through a reform of public worship the extent of which cannot be certainly determined. The remedy most in favor for the existing evils of worship and of government seems to have been a centralization, as far as possible, of all authorized activity at Jerusalem.

Be that as it may, not long after Manasseh ascended the throne there was a reaction, supported by the king himself, in favor of the earlier freedom of worship, with all the objectionable practices which Isaiah had condemned. We can only conjecture the cause of this reaction. Isaiah had probably passed away; the hopes which his glowing promises had excited may have been too definite and literal, or the prophetic reforms may have been too precipitate and sweeping. At all events, a bitter and bloody persecution of the prophets and their

adherents was sanctioned. Possibly Micah 6 : 9 to 7 : 6 reflects this melancholy period.

The years of quiet isolation that followed were fruitful years for prophecy. Heroic men (2 Kings 21 : 10 ff.) who proclaimed the judgment of God upon such ruthless wickedness were not wanting; but the greater number of the men of God used their enforced seclusion as a time for arranging and copying the valued sermons of the earlier prophets, for putting into practical and most effective form the precepts of national and social life which had been handed down from Moses, for tracing out and editing the records of the nation's history, and, especially, for reflecting upon and reformulating the principles of the divine government over men. Thus, when another opportunity came, they were ready to grapple with Judah's spiritual problems from a broader point of view. The utterances of Zephaniah, Jeremiah, and Habakkuk, are the fruitage of this half-century of thinking.

The reigns of Manasseh and his son Amon lasted about fifty years. They were vassals of Assyria, and, with one slight exception, entirely submissive. Manasseh even introduced the star worship of Nineveh, and made it popular. In 639 B. C., Amon's little son, Josiah, was placed on the throne by a revolution, the exact reason for which is not clear. Whatever its cause, it

gave the prophetic party renewed recognition. The little king came under the influence of the prophets, and was educated into sympathy with them.

Close to the king at this time was Zephaniah, himself a relative through his direct descent from Hezekiah. His royal birth, however, did not prevent his unsparing condemnation of the share of the princes of the blood in the nation's degeneracy. Like his favorite author, Isaiah, he was a clear-eyed citizen of Jerusalem, referring repeatedly to its different quarters, its types, and its perils. Though but little older than the young king, Zephaniah's earnest, thoughtful face must have inspired those who knew him with confidence in his zeal and wisdom. His prophecies show that he was an eager student of the writings of Isaiah, although the altered circumstances of his age gave his thoughts a different form.

It was about the fourteenth year of King Josiah's reign, in 625 B. C., that Zephaniah was impelled to give his powerful support in public addresses to the reforms which Josiah was aiming to carry through. He complains that the nobles and other leaders are still maintaining all the abuses of the past, so that even the professed believers in Jehovah are becoming skeptical of any success in bringing about reform. Such a state of affairs was in itself a trumpet-call of God to the truly prophetic soul, yet such a one would delay to utter his

message until he could see an indication of God's preparation for his work.

Just as the prophets of the eighth century saw in the Assyrian the scourge of God, so Zephaniah beheld some unnamed "guests" (1 : 7) preparing to partake of Jehovah's sacrificial banquet. It is generally agreed that he had in mind the Scythians, a people like the Tartars, who, according to Herodotus, broke out from the northern mountains like a storm-cloud, and ravaged all Western Asia as far as Egypt. Since they made their way, about 626 B.C., to the very border of Egypt, they must certainly have been a menace to all Palestine.

It was to bring home to his people the awful nearness of God's purifying judgment, and to urge them to repent before it should be too late, that the young prophet lifted up his voice in the streets of his city.

II

SERMONS CONCERNING THE COMING JUDGMENT

1. *The Day of Jehovah a Peculiarly Distressful Day for Judah* (1 : 2 to 2 : 3)

Jehovah's wrath against all created things (1 : 2, 3).

Jehovah, the righteous One, supreme Ruler of the universe, is forced to announce a message of judgment against all who oppose his will or his ways. "I will sweep away," he declares, "everything on the face of

the earth, man or beast, fowl or fish, that contributes to the spread of wickedness in the earth.

"Especially in my city, Jerusalem, will I stretch out my hand to smite. I will cut off every vestige of Baal worship. I will purge from the official roll both the idolatrous priests and the unfaithful priests of my sanctuary. I will cut off all those who worship the heavenly bodies, as well as those who pretend to worship Jehovah, while they continue to render homage to cruel Moloch. The same judgment will overtake those who have openly renounced allegiance to me."

Its manifestation in Jerusalem (1 : 4-6).

Hush! it is Jehovah's judgment day. He draweth near to offer Judah as a sacrifice. His guests for the sacrificial feast—those dreaded, unknown foes from the north—he hath already purified, and they await his bidding.

Jehovah's sacrificial feast (1 : 7).

When the sacrifice is ready, I, the Lord Jehovah, will seek out for punishment all those who are responsible for Judah's wickedness. I will visit retribution upon those nobles and princes who encourage all manner of extravagance, clothing themselves in costly foreign apparel, and upon the officials that use their nearness to the king as a license for violence and spoil, dishonoring the name of their royal master.

The victims will be the nobles and princes (1 : 8, 9).

On that fatal day, when the guests come to the banquet, a great wail of despair and terror shall come from

The merchants (1 : 10, 11).

the fish-gate in the northern wall, where they will enter, and from the newly built quarter of the city, where the wealthy live ; and shrieks of alarm shall come from the heights. Howl, O dwellers in the merchant quarter, for when the foe appears your treasures and goods will be the first to be seized.

The disheartened and skeptical "believers" (1 : 12, 13).

On that day, saith Jehovah, I will search Jerusalem through and through. None shall escape, for all the dark retreats shall be carefully searched. I will lay hold of those who have lost their zeal, who are listless, self-indulgent, skeptical of all achievement, and indifferent about God. Their wealth others shall take ; their houses shall be despoiled ; whatever they have planned for their selfish and cowardly ease they shall lose.

The characteristics of Jehovah's day (1 : 14-18).

This fateful day of Jehovah comes speedily. It is almost at hand. Listen ! It shall be a day when even the hardened warrior will weep, for then the wrath of God against evil shall be outpoured, bringing distress and hardship, devastation and destruction, a day when all nature in sympathy shall be shrouded in clouds. On that day will be heard the blast of the war-trumpet and the warriors' battle-cry ; for the army which Jehovah has invited to the feast shall capture the fortresses and strong cities. Jehovah will bring men from distress to helpless perplexity. They have sinned beyond forgiveness, and shall be punished without pity. Nothing can deliver

them from the judgment. It is to be world-wide and complete.

Therefore, O nation which has too long been indifferent to Jehovah, take this opportunity to repent sincerely and serve him, before his anger bursts forth in fury and scatters you like chaff.[1] Seek him also, you that are humble and obedient. Strive earnestly to excel in righteousness and meekness, that you may be secure in that fearful day.

A warning to repentance and zeal (2 : 1-3).

2. *The Day of Jehovah, a Day of Judgment against Nations*[2] (2 : 4-15)

In the day of Jehovah his judgment will be carried out against the nations, who have deserved his wrath, and first upon Philistia, near the sea. Gaza, the busy city of traffic, and Ashkelon, shall each become an utter desolation.[3] Ekron and Ashdod shall be taken by storm, and completely ravaged. The Philistines shall cease to be a nation. Their fertile land shall be turned into pasturage, a resort for the shepherds of Judah, when Jehovah brings back his own people from captivity to dwell in the land.

Against Philistia (2 : 4-7).

[1] Verses 1 and 2 are very obscure. The above seems to be the general meaning, but it involves one or two uncertain readings.

[2] This whole passage was probably written originally in the elegiac meter (see p. 36). Now only verses 4, 5, 13-15, are intact.

[3] The assonance here defies imitation. *Gazzah gazubah; Ekron te'āqer.*

Against the spiteful and arrogant children of Moab and Ammon (2 : 8-11).

Jehovah[1] has been listening all this while to the bitter insults of the people of Moab and Ammon against Judah, and he has seen their seizure of her territory. Wherefore he will destroy them as completely as Sodom or Gomorrah of old, turning over their fertile territory to nettles and barren salt-pits. When the men of Judah are restored to their native land, they shall also possess these countries. Jehovah will do this because of the pride and arrogance of these heathen peoples. By such deeds he makes himself known to the nations. They will thus see how impotent are their gods, and will worship him alone.

Against Ethiopia (2 : 12).

O people of distant Ethiopia, you also shall be the victims of the avenging sword which Jehovah will order to be drawn from its sheath.

Against haughty Nineveh (2 : 13-15).

Especially will he reckon with the haughty mistress of nations, Assyria. He will extend his hand to smite her, and make her an utter desolation. Behold, then, the light-hearted city, Nineveh, so confident of her strength, so superior in resources, so incomparable,

> How hath she become a desolation,
> A lair of wild beasts!
> Every one passing by her hisseth,
> Shaking his hand.

[1] Verses 8-11, not being in meter, are regarded by some scholars as an interpolation.

3. *The Day of Jehovah, a Means of Redemption for Jerusalem* (3 : 1-13)

Jerusalem deserves a judgment (3 : 1, 2).

Woe to Jerusalem, rebellious against Jehovah, polluted by bloodshed and iniquity, filled with outrage and oppression! She is disobedient; she refuses instruction; she has no faith in God; she draws not near to him.

Her leaders utterly corrupt (3 : 3, 4).

What wonder that she is so, when we consider her leaders! Her princes are as ravenous as lions, her judges as voracious and insatiable as wolves of evening, her prophets are arrogant boasters and men of immoral conduct; her priests, instead of guarding the sanctuary, profane all things holy, and, instead of maintaining the pure interpretation of the law, do violence to it.

She is insensible to the evidences of Jehovah's character and purpose (3 : 5-7).

Jehovah makes Jerusalem his dwelling-place. He repeatedly exhibits his righteousness through his word and works, but the wicked man sees nothing of all this, and is unaffected by it. Repeatedly he claims, "I have executed judgment on other nations from which Judah might have taken warning. I thought that she would humble herself, and receive instruction, and keep in mind henceforth my commands, but only the more zealously did her people do evil."

Therefore, wait until the great day of Jehovah's mani-

The day of universal judgment coming (3 : 8).

festation, when he comes to bear witness of what he has seen. On that day there will be a universal judgment of all nations ; for it is his fixed purpose to execute upon them that penalty which they richly deserve.

Causing the nations to be converted (3 : 9, 10).

["Then," Jehovah declares, "will I purify the peoples, that they may be worthy to invoke my name, and may serve me whole-heartedly. Even from far distant Ethiopia shall my people come with offerings."]

Judah, reduced to a remnant, shall serve Jehovah (3 : 11-13).

On that day, O chosen people, so completely will you forgo evil deeds that no recollection of them will call up a blush of shame ; for all your self-confident and haughty ones shall be removed, and those who are left, though few in number, and lowly and poor, shall be trustful, honorable, truthful, peaceful, and happy.

II

THE SONG OF ZION REDEEMED (3 : 14-20)

Jehovah's protecting presence with Zion (3 : 14, 15).

[Sing and shout aloud for joy, O Jerusalem. Your judgments are over, your foes defeated ; Jehovah, your king, is in your midst ; all your troubles are at an end.

Removes all fear (3 : 16, 17).

In that day Jerusalem will have no cause for fear or despondency, for Jehovah, who dwells in Zion, is mighty to deliver her out of every trouble. He will rejoice over every chance to show his love and happiness.

"At that time," Jehovah promises, "I will gather together the Israelites now dispersed among the nations, who are longing for the sanctuary and for the sacred feasts. I will then do all that I have ever promised. I will heal and restore my afflicted ones, and will make them respected and renowned wherever they have been humiliated."] Restoration and glorification for the Hebrew race (3 : 18, 20).

JEREMIAH'S PROPHETIC ACTIVITY DURING THE REIGN OF JOSIAH

JEREMIAH'S PROPHETIC ACTIVITY DURING THE REIGN OF JOSIAH

I

JEREMIAH, THE YOUNG REFORMER

A brisk walk of an hour northward from Jerusalem along one of the great highways which radiate from the sacred city, brings one to the little town of Anâta, the Anathoth of the Hebrews. It is unattractive to-day, with its few poor hovels, and it must have been insignificant also in antiquity (cf. Isa. 10 · 30). Although shut off from Jerusalem by hills, it figured as one of the northern military out-posts of the capital. In the days of Solomon, Abiathar, a descendant of the priestly house of Eli, was banished thither (1 Kings 2 : 26) ; and it is referred to elsewhere (Josh. 21 : 8) as the residence of certain priestly families.

To one of these families belonged Hilkiah, the father of Jeremiah. It is easy to imagine that, on the day of his birth (which he later, in a time of deep despondency, bitterly cursed), heavy clouds shut out the warm sunshine, and the descending rains converted the filth, which is never wanting in an Oriental town, into slippery

slime,—a true suggestion of the unpleasant environment amidst which he was destined to spend his long life.

Concerning his boyhood, we have some hints in the opening chapters of his prophecy. In the character of his parents he recognized an important element in his preparations for the work of a prophet. Possibly some one of his ancestors belonged to that group of disciples who drank in and treasured the teachings of the great Isaiah. Jeremiah's sermons demonstrate that he was also a careful student of the earlier prophets. With Hosea, whose language and ideas made the deepest impression upon him, he must have recognized the closest kinship, in experience as well as in thought. For both lived in the deep shadow of a great national catastrophe which they were powerless to avert; both were rejected by their contemporaries, and both, capable of the most intense happiness, were denied all the joys which their age held dear.

During Jeremiah's boyhood, spent in the latter days of Manasseh's reactionary reign, that which was purest and best in his nation's experience was found in the past. The heathenism which reigned all but supreme in court and in temple made the life of a true prophet a living sacrifice. If, however, the revelation already vouchsafed to the Hebrew race was to be preserved, and if that nation was to move forward instead of hopelessly

reverting to heathenism, such a sacrifice was absolutely necessary.

Appreciating facts like these, it is not difficult to understand the soul struggles reflected in the chapter which tells of Jeremiah's call.

When the final decision was made, about the year 626 B. C., he must have been still a young man of twenty or twenty-five, since for over forty years following that event he continued to preach uninterruptedly to his countrymen. Those forty years witnessed more startling changes than any other four decades in Hebrew history. During the entire period, Jeremiah was in reality the most prominent figure in Judah's life. His prophecies, so full of historical allusions, are the best and fullest sources for the knowledge of that period. Through all the varying changes of party and political fortunes, he proclaimed the same eternal truths, adapting them, as necessary, to new conditions. Naturally he frequently repeats himself. As with Hosea's sermons, the situation and the prophet's feelings were too intense to favor logical development and literary finish ; but through all of Jeremiah's sermons one may trace the evidence of an ever-deepening appreciation of the sublimest truths vouchsafed to man. Despised, often persecuted, without the consolations of wife or children, sometimes discouraged, but never daunted, this great soul, faithful to

the commands of Jehovah, gave his all as a voluntary offering for his race and for humanity, thus presenting the most conspicuous example in the old Hebrew state of service perfected through suffering and complete self-surrender.

His earliest sermons, which are preserved in the collection made during the fourth year of Jehoiakim, reveal the important part which he enacted in connection with the movement which culminated in the great reformation of 621 B.C. under Josiah.

At first the prevailing idolatry, which survived from the days of Manasseh, almost appalled him ; but this condition only brought out into brighter contrast later successes, crowned by the public acceptance of the Book of the Covenant,—practically our present Book of Deuteronomy. Associated with him was a faithful band of prophets like Zephaniah, and priests like Hilkiah, all united in one noble purpose to reform the religious life of their nation.

The foes from the north, described in chapters 4-6, are probably the dread Scythians, who, about 626 B.C., came sweeping down the coast of the Eastern Mediterranean, furnishing in the terror-stricken Judeans an audience, and in themselves an effective text, for such prophets of reform as Zephaniah and Jeremiah. The short section preserved in verses 1-8 of the eleventh chap-

ter, probably contains extracts from sermons preached by Jeremiah about the year 621 B.C., in connection with the institution of reform measures under Josiah. They are the only reminders of what must have been one of the most active and happy periods of the prophet's life.

II

JEREMIAH'S CALL AND COMMISSION

The call to service (1 : 4, 5).

These are the thoughts which Jehovah placed in my heart when he first called me to be his prophet: "From your earliest days I have surrounded you with holy influences, and have stood in peculiarly intimate relationship with you. Now I have commissioned you to be my ambassador to proclaim my will to the nations."

The response (1 : 6-8).

To this call to service I replied: "Alas, O Lord, I am not gifted as a speaker, and my youth and inexperience unfit me for the great task." But Jehovah encouraged me with the assurance: "Whatsoever I shall ask you to do, that will you be able to accomplish. Be not afraid of those whom you will be called upon to address, for I will ever be present to deliver you."

The divine commission (1 : 9, 10).

Then, symbolizing my preparation for the prophetic office, Jehovah touched my mouth, and declared that he had placed his word therein. He further added that my

mission would be to denounce and to proclaim the destruction of the nations to which I was sent, but that I should also announce their ultimate restoration.

A vision of assurance (1 : 11, 12).

Then there rose before my troubled mind the vision of an almond-tree, which first awakens from the deep slumber of winter, and which stands as the symbol of watchfulness. With that vision came the assurance from Jehovah that thus would he ever be watchful to speedily fulfil his word which I should proclaim.

A vision of overwhelming judgment (1 : 13-16).

Again before my mind rose the picture of a huge caldron in the north about to spill its seething contents upon the land. This, I soon learned, symbolized the fiery flood of war which Jehovah was about to turn upon Judah ; for by foreign powers would the sentence which he was about to pronounce upon his apostate and idolatrous people be executed.

Further assurance of divine protection (1 : 17-19).

When the divine command came to declare the truth revealed to me, there came also the assurance that, although king, princes, priests, and prophets, would bitterly oppose me, like a strong fortress I should stand out against them, invincible, because guarded by Jehovah.

III

REFORM SERMONS

1. *The Story of Judah, the Unrepentant Prodigal* (2 : 1 to 3 : 5)

The innocency of the earlier days (2 : 1-3).

Jehovah commanded me to go, and in his name remind the men of Jerusalem of the innocency which characterized the earlier days of their nation's history, and which the eternal heart of love holds in such fond remembrance. Then the bond of mutual affection between him and the people whom he set aside as sacred to himself was unbroken. Woe to the nation which then presumed to wrong his chosen ones!

Subsequent infidelity (2 : 4-13).

Listen, O Hebrew race, to the charge which Jehovah brings against your fathers. Following their own wicked inclinations, they soon forgot all his tender care for them. This fruitful land, which he gave them as a heritage, they proceeded forthwith to pollute. The priests, whose duty it was to instruct the people in the law of Jehovah, have questioned his very existence; the rulers, whose duty it was to lead the people, have dishonored him; the prophets, whose duty it was to proclaim his will, have spoken in the name of Baal. The entire heathen world does not present such a strange anomaly. Though their deities are vain creations, no

pagan peoples have exchanged their gods for those of their neighbors. Let heaven and earth behold with wonder and with horror. This people have forsaken Jehovah, the source of all life, and have placed their trust in idols, the worthless works of men's hands !

The punishment well merited (2 : 14-17).

Was it because Israel, like a slave, was subject to the caprices of his master that his land has been wasted by foreign conquerors, and his cities burned and left uninhabited? You all know the real reason. The Egyptians shall likewise devour your strength, O Judeans, for you have deserted Jehovah, and these shall be the consequences.

Judah's political and religious crimes (2 : 18-28).

Why have you sought entangling alliances, first with Egypt and then with her foe, Assyria, irreverently turning your backs upon Jehovah, who is your true protector? He declares : "From your earliest days you have broken my commandments, and have refused allegiance to me, preferring the vile service of the gods of your heathen neighbors. The fault is not mine ; for I created you perfect, and established you in this land. Whence this sad perversion of your character? The moral stain is too deep to be removed by external cleansing. It is folly for you to say that you are sinless. Degenerate are all your tendencies. Like a beast, your animal passions rule you, leading you into gross idolatry. Rulers, priests, prophets, and people, have, in secret at

least, descended to fetish worship. As among the heathen, each city has its patron god. In the time of danger and distress, they shall be cruelly deceived who trust in these creations of their own hands.

"Having sinned so deeply, do you dare plead your case against me? All my efforts to discipline and instruct you have met with contempt. The prophets whom I sent to teach you have fallen victims to your sword. And yet, have I ever neglected my people Israel? You are the ones who have forgotten me through these long years, devoting yourselves to idolatrous exercises, sucking out the blood of the innocent. Most hateful of all is the self-complacency with which you assert that you have done no wrong. I, Jehovah, will reveal your perfidy. The new alliance with Egypt will bring to you only disaster. Their hypocrisy (2 : 29-37).

"How contrary to instruction and the commands of the law it is for a man to take back a divorced wife; and yet you think that you can forsake me, and indulge in all the lewd rites connected with the worship of idols, and then return to me guiltless. In vain do you cry, 'My father,' trusting that because of the kindness which I showed you in your youth, and because of my compassion, I will forgive you, even though your wicked deeds give the lie to your professions." Empty words insufficient to secure pardon (3 : 1-5).

2. *Promises to Israel and Judah, if they will Repent* (3 : 6 to 4 : 2)

Judah the more culpable (3 : 6-11).

On another occasion, during the reign of Josiah, Jehovah gave me this message: "Thou hast seen the apostasy of the northern kingdom, and how it has failed to learn the lesson of repentance. Judah's treachery, however, is more unpardonable than Israel's apostasy, for the men of the south were warned by the terrible fate which overtook the northern kingdom, and yet, while they hypocritically profess to be contrite, they persistently go on sinning.

Pardon and restoration for Israel (3 : 12-15).

"O northerners, when once you acknowledge the error of your ways, I will forgive your sins; and, again accepted as my covenant people, I will bring you back to Jerusalem. I will also set over you righteous rulers and teachers to guide and instruct you.

Extension of the old covenant (3 : 16-18).

"When the numbers of the faithful remnant of the Hebrew race have increased, the narrow limitations of the old covenant, which was symbolized by the ark, will be broken down, and the ancient forms of worship will be abandoned; for then Jehovah will no longer be conceived of as dwelling in one especial place. Jerusalem shall be the center of his world-wide rule, which shall be joyfully recognized by all peoples. No longer shall men oppose their own stubborn wills to that of the Eternal. [Then shall the Judeans, who are soon to be

scattered, be gathered from the lands of their captivity to inhabit and enjoy this fair portion of the earth which was assigned to their ancestors.]

"Thus it is my purpose not only to give you a princely heritage, O Israelites, among the people of the earth, but also to adopt you as my own. Alas! O nation Israel, how your apostasy is defeating my gracious intentions! Yet, the moment you truly repent, I will remove all traces of your sins. Approach me with the genuine prayer of contrition, saying: 'We come unto thee, who art the true, the only God. The heathen deities whom we have worshiped are a delusion. Thou art indeed the saviour of our nation. Grossly have we and our fathers sinned against thee in devoting our best gifts to base idols, disobeying thy gracious commands. In shame we hide our faces.'

True contrition, the one and absolute condition (3 : 19-25).

"If thus, O Israel, you will confess your sins, confirming your words by your deeds, then shall the heathen world beholding such loyalty be speedily attracted to Jehovah, and with you enjoy his rich blessings."

The fruits of contrition (4 : 1, 2).

3. *The Judgment Approaching from the North* (4 : 3 to 6 : 30)

Give heed, O Judeans, to Jehovah's words of warning: "Overcome your evil tendencies, and open your hearts to my transforming influences, lest I bring upon

Repent while there is time (4 : 3, 4).

you that overwhelming destruction which you so richly merit."

The approach of the foe (4 : 5-18).

Spread the alarm ! The dread foe, who is to execute Jehovah's judgment, is already at hand. Flee, O Judah, to your walled cities. Like a fierce lion this destroyer of nations is rapidly advancing to devastate your lands. Lament, for no mercy will be shown. Surprise and horror because of the magnitude of the calamity which threatens shall overwhelm all classes. Yet there is no mistake on the part of Jehovah. Your deeds have called down this fate upon you. Repent, do right, and the catastrophe may yet be averted.

Destruction, overwhelming, well-merited, and unavoidable (4 : 19-31).

As the prophet of the people, I am overcome with terror and grief, so sudden and horrible is the disaster which impends. Yet I cannot intercede for them, since it is due to their folly. All nature is affected by the fearful judgment. It is Jehovah's purpose, by the hands of these pitiless foes, to render the land a barren waste, although he will spare a few. Vain shall be the measures by which the people will seek to deliver themselves. Amidst unutterable woes, shall proud Jerusalem fall before the murderous invaders.

The universal corruption of Jerusalem precludes pardon (5 : 1-9).

If a righteous man could be found in this wicked city, Jehovah would gladly spare it ; but so vitiated is the atmosphere that all are affected by the prevailing hypocrisy and impiety. The leaders are as corrupt as the mis-

guided masses. In view of their black record in the past, and their present disobedient attitude, Jehovah can do nothing else than give over his careless, adulterous people as a prey to these hunters of men.

The command to destroy the guilty people (5 : 10-19).

Advance, therefore, destroyers. Northern Israel and Judah alike have spurned Jehovah, and laughed to scorn his prophets who warned them of coming retribution. The Lord will confirm the words of his messengers ; but woe to those who doubt. The instrument with which he will execute vengeance is a powerful ancient nation, courageous, bloodthirsty, and speaking a foreign tongue. Like a locust scourge, these insatiable invaders will destroy everything before them. Only a remnant of Jehovah's people will survive to taste the bitterness of slavery in a foreign land.

The persistent wickedness of the people and of their leaders (5 : 20-31).

Can you not see and appreciate the danger which impends ? Do you feel no awe in the presence of Jehovah, who rules supreme in the natural world ? Alas ! there is no reverence in their hearts. Sin has blinded their eyes. They are so intent upon defrauding their fellows that they disregard their duties both to God and to their neighbors. Superlative impiety ! The prophets in the name of Jehovah tell lies, and abet the priests in their unjust practices, while the masses rejoice in such leaders as these.

Sound the alarm throughout the whole land. Jerusa-

It will soon be too late for deliverance (6 : 1-8).

lem's fate is sealed. The hills upon which the city is built shall again be uninhabited ; the quiet resort of shepherds, as in the days before it was built. Already the besiegers are completing their plans for the capture of the wicked condemned capital. Will you not avail yourselves, O Jerusalemites, of an opportunity to save by repentance your homes from bitter desolation?

Only retribution awaiting this defiant, misled people (6 : 9-21).

Let the work of destruction begin at once, and be complete. They heed not. The message of the true prophet has become odious to them. Their contemptuous attitude toward truth arouses only righteous indignation. There is no hope, for greed rules them all. The official priests and prophets teach falsely. Instead of boldly pointing out the guilt which is proving the nation's ruin, they have lulled the people into their present fatal indifference by saying, "All is well," while, in fact, nothing is well. For their perfidy they feel no compunctions. Therefore they shall share a like fate with their victims, the masses. In vain has Jehovah pointed out clearly, by the mouths of his true prophets, the cause which he wishes his people to follow, and which alone can bring them to peace ; but they have defiantly refused to listen. After such conduct, let them not think that his favor can be purchased with rich oblations and sacrifices.

I assure you in the name of Jehovah that a great

nation is sweeping down upon you from the distant north. A cruel, merciless host are they, all-engulfing and as irresistible as the surging sea. Already a rumor respecting them has reached your ears and chilled your hearts. You would do well bitterly to lament, because of the terrible flood of invasion which may burst upon you at any moment. The approaching invader (6 : 22-26).

Jehovah has commissioned me to test the character of this nation, and I have found it completely wanting. All are rebellious in their attitude toward Jehovah, and deceitful in their relations with each other. It is useless to attempt to eliminate the evil elements from the good, for they are indissolubly united. The result is that the whole nation is worthless, and has already been rejected by Jehovah. The nation incapable of moral elevation (6 : 27-30).

4. *Enforcing the Nation's Covenant with Jehovah* (11 : 1-8)

The aim of my earlier sermons was partially realized. In the face of impending calamity, the people, outwardly at least, turned to Jehovah, and listened to the injunctions of his faithful priests and prophets. The new law-book, distinctly defining the duties and obligations of the prophet of Jehovah, was brought forth from the temple, publicly read, solemnly accepted by the assembled Judeans, and promulgated as a law. At that Jeremiah as an apostle of the covenant (11 : 1-8).

time Jehovah prompted me to remind the people of that sacred covenant, from the earliest times the basis of the peculiar relation between him and their race, and to enjoin upon them, under penalty, carefully to heed its every injunction. To the divine command I was responsive, and went forth on a preaching tour through the cities of Judah, and especially in the streets of Jerusalem, to explain and enforce the terms of the old covenant made with our forefathers when they came from Egypt. In my teaching I pointed out how they, alas ! disregarded Jehovah's earnest exhortations to obedience, although it was the supreme duty and privilege of the later and more enlightened generation to avoid the grave mistakes of the past, and to enjoy to the full the blessings attendant upon doing his will.

THE MESSAGE OF HABAKKUK

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I

THE DATE OF THE PROPHECY

Respecting the date of the short prophecy which bears the superscription, "The Oracle which Habakkuk the Prophet did see," neither the title nor contemporary records give any testimony. The distinct reference to the Chaldeans, in the first chapter, as an active world-power, with which the Judeans are already well acquainted, indicates that it must be later than the great battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C., when the supremacy of southwestern Asia passed for the first time into the hands of these new conquerors. The same chapter reflects the amazement and horror with which the people of Palestine viewed the rapid advance of the Chaldeans. There is little doubt, therefore, that the present prophecy comes from the closing years of the seventh century B.C. The conditions in Judah, referred to in the opening verses, are those which we know resulted from the weak, reactionary policy of the selfish Jehoiakim. The prophet was one of that remarkable group of inspired

workers who, like Jeremiah, had witnessed the glorious reformation of Josiah and the peace and prosperity which followed in its train, and who had survived to see all that glory swept away and their beloved land spoiled by foes from within and from without.

As a patriot and a faithful follower of Jehovah, he voices the cry of anguish and doubt which must at that time have burst from many lips; as an inspired prophet, he answers that cry with the firm assurance of faith. The lyric ode, preserved in the third chapter, and dedicated "to Habakkuk the prophet," has so many affinities, in language and in thought, with post-exilic psalms, that it is regarded by many as the work of a later writer. Whether the conclusion be accepted or not, it must be admitted that it completes the thought of the book, and therefore amply justifies its present position. In sublimity of thought and of diction, it is surpassed by few passages in the Old Testament.

II

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE PROPHET AND JEHOVAH. THEME—"HOW LONG SHALL THE WICKED BE ALLOWED TO TRIUMPH OVER THE RIGHTEOUS?" (1 : 1 to 2 : 4)

The prophet's cry of despair (1 : 2-4).

How long in vain, O Jehovah, shall we beseech thee to put an end to the deeds of bloodshed and wrong which constantly offend our eyes and chill our hearts? Surely thou seest that it is impossible for a righteous man to secure justice before the public tribunals. Why dost thou thus allow evil to triumph over right?

Jehovah's reply (1 : 5-11).

Open your eyes, O prophet, and behold the nation rapidly advancing through which I purpose forthwith to inaugurate a new epoch, undreamed of in human history. Already these energetic, pitiless Chaldeans are launched on their career of spoliation and of conquest. Like fierce beasts of prey, their cavalry are sweeping all before them. Kings, armies, and strong fortresses are powerless to check their destructive advance. Their rule, however, shall not endure forever, for they make their own might their god. Overwhelming pride shall prove the source of their downfall.

The prophet's deeper perplexity (1 : 12–2 : 1).

Yea, Lord, we know that thou art eternal, and that we shall not be utterly destroyed. We recognize that thou, who art just and omnipotent, hast sent forth this new

world-conqueror as thy instrument of judgment; and yet, how canst thou, the altogether Righteous, remain silent while these impious Chaldeans, by deceit and violence, destroy men and nations far less deserving of such a fate than are they, the destroyers? How long wilt thou allow them, unchecked, to prey upon helpless peoples, growing fat upon the plunder which their merciless armies have stripped from the victims of their swords? I can only wait and watch until Jehovah gives me an answer to these crushing questions, which are pressing upon the hearts of the faithful, and which are threatening to destroy all faith in his power or in his willingness to deliver in the time of danger and stress.

Jehovah's message of comfort (2 : 2-4).

Inscribe the message, O prophet, upon tablets, and make it so plain that its contents can be apprehended at a glance; for it shall soon be confirmed by the events of history. "Pride dominates these rapacious Chaldeans, therefore their ultimate downfall is certain; but the righteous, because of their moral integrity and believing fidelity, which are the absolute essentials of life, though now crushed and oppressed, shall surely survive the present crisis."

III

REASONS WHY THE DOWNFALL OF THE CHALDEANS IS ASSURED (2 : 5-20)

The Chaldeans are intoxicated with self-pride. Like the drunkard, they have only a false, distorted view of reality. Their appetite for rapine and conquest is as insatiable as is Sheol itself. The time will speedily come when the nations which are now the victims of their rapacity shall taunt them, saying, "Woe to this robber, laden with unrighteous plunder! At last his day of retribution has come. He himself, at the hands of the peoples spoiled by him, shall experience the wrongs which he has so ruthlessly inflicted."

Their false pride and lust for conquest (2 : 5-8).

Woe to that selfish nation which seeks to add to its own strength and resources by plundering other peoples. The crimes thus committed will cry out to heaven for redress, and certain vengeance shall overtake the Chaldeans.

Their selfish, unprincipled policy (2 : 9-11).

Woe to that unprincipled nation which rears its proud capital through the toil and life-blood of conquered races. It is not in accordance with Jehovah's purpose that men should thus vainly sacrifice their energy and their innocence to attaining material power and possessions. Instead, it is the Lord's will that the knowledge

Their base methods and ambitions (2 : 12-14).

of his character and grace become the common and treasured possession of every human being.

Their heartless treatment of their neighbors (2 : 15-17).

Woe to that merciless nation which causes the peoples about to reel and to fall insensible, like one who has drunk a poisonous drug, that it may exult in their downfall. It, in turn, shall know the taste of Jehovah's wrath; and all its present glory shall be changed to humiliation and shame. The wanton crimes committed against this fair land of Canaan shall be visited upon its guilty head.

Their foolish idolatry (2 : 18-20).

Woe to that superstitious nation that trusts in images of wood and stone, dead, dumb idols, made by the hands of artisans, and incapable either of instructing or of delivering their devotees. How utterly different is Jehovah, the God of spirit, who abides in his holy sanctuary! Let all creation stand in silent awe before him.

IV

THE PRAYER OF FAITH—A LYRIC ODE (3)

The invocation (3 : 2).

I heard thy message, and I was affrighted.
Thy work revive yet again, O Jehovah;
Ere long reveal thyself strong to deliver;
Mercy forget not when judgment thou sendest.

The Almighty will come as of old,
The Supreme from his ancient abode,

The response (3 : 3-6).

With his glory the heavens are spread
And his praise fills the earth, far and wide;
For his splendor is like the clear light;
He has rays coming forth from his hand,
And therein has he hidden his strength.
The dread pestilence goes on before,
Burning fever pursues in his track;
Now he stands, and behold the earth rocks,
At his glance mighty nations do quake,
And the mountains eternal fall down.
Low before him the ancient hills bow.
God to-day, as of old, is the same.

The purpose of Jehovah's advent (3 : 7-15).

Egypt's sons in sad plight I behold
Lo, the men of wild Midian fear!
Art thou, Lord, again wroth with the streams,
That in terror before thee they flee?
Is thy fury now turned toward the seas,
That thou drivest thy swift steeds, the clouds,
Which thy chariots of victory draw?
That thou barest thy bow for the strife,
So that cleft are the seas by thy stroke?

In thy presence the mountains retire,
The great floods seek in fear to depart,
The abyss also lifts up his voice,
The proud heights raise toward heaven their hands,
Both the sun and the moon cease their course,
At the gleam of thy bolts, as they fly,
At the flash of thy spears, as they glance.
Since in anger thou treadest the earth,
And in fury thou smitest thy foes.

Habakkuk 3 : 13-19

To deliver thy sons art thou come,
To deliver thine own art thou here.
Wicked foes hast thou cast to the earth,
Their last hope hast thou torn from their hearts.
Their defenders are smitten with spears—
They who come as a tempest to smite
And devour the afflicted with joy.
Thou hast trodden the sea with thy steeds ;
Finite man in thy presence is weak.

Effect of the revelation upon the prophet (3 : 16-19).

I heard the message, and fain would I tremble,
Quivering seized me, beholding the vision,
Courage departed, my bones lost their power,
Terror and fear, at first, wellnigh o'ercame me.
Calmly and peaceful I wait, while destroyers
Ruthlessly ravage the lands of my nation.
Yea, though the fig-tree put forth no new blossoms,
Though on the vines no fresh fruitage is springing,
Though the green olive rewards not the labor,
Though the tilled fields do not yield a fair increase,
Though the last flocks be destroyed in the sheep-folds,
Though all we cherish be swept from our country
Yet, as for me, glory I in Jehovah.
I will rejoice in Jehovah, my Saviour.
God is my strength, my delight, my defender ;
He will uphold, will protect, will exalt me,
Filling my soul with a joy never dying.

JEREMIAH'S ACTIVITY DURING THE REIGN OF JEHOIAKIM

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I

THE CHANGED SITUATION

The twelve years of the reign of Josiah which followed the reformation were the brightest in the history of Judah. Immunity from foreign attacks enabled that worthy prince and his able advisers to organize the resources of his little kingdom, and to extend its influence until the southern part of the territory, formerly belonging to the northern Israelites, fell under his sway. More important still, the prophetic party, who included in their ranks all who truly worshiped the Jehovah of the prophets as opposed to the Jehovah of whom the ignorant masses conceived, found in Josiah a strong champion ; for he advanced, by the influence of the throne, and, if need be, by the sword, the principles inculcated by the prophets in their sermons and by the priests in the written law. The effect of a half-century of idolatry could not, however, be effaced in one moment, nor even in a decade.

The tendencies toward a more sensuous nature-wor-

ship were inborn in the popular heart, while the austere moral demands of the new prophetic religion were too exalted to be clearly appreciated by the masses, and too counter to all their cherished traditions not to arouse their secret antagonism.

While prosperity crowned the efforts of the reforming party, blind popular discontent found no open expression ; but when Josiah, who had gone out against the Egyptian king, Necho, confident that Jehovah would give him the victory, fell, slain on the plain of Megiddo, that opposition became apparent.

After Necho had brushed aside the foolhardy king, who sought to hinder him in his eastward march, he hastened onward to meet more important foes. The prophetic party improved this respite to raise to the kingship Shallum, a younger son of Josiah, who assumed, on ascending the throne, the name of Jehoahaz. They undoubtedly hoped that he would be able to revive the shattered fortunes of the kingdom, and carry on the religious policy so nobly instituted by his father ; but the disaster on the plain of Megiddo destroyed their influence with the majority of the people. The masses clamored for the old *régime* which had been set aside by Josiah, while the return of Necho within a few months deprived the prophetic party of the last vestige of power. Recognizing that Jehoahaz represented the

supporters of his enemy, Josiah, the Egyptian king carried off the young Judean monarch in chains to the land of the Nile. Jeremiah refers touchingly to this incident in chapter 22 : 10-12 of his prophecy. "Lament not over the death of Josiah, but wail for his son Shallum (Jehoahaz; cf. 2 Kings 23 : 30, and 1 Chron. 3 : 15), who has been carried away into the land of captivity, where he shall die, never again rejoicing his eyes with a view of his native land."

Jehoiakim, Josiah's eldest son, was appointed king by Necho in place of Jehoahaz. For the patriotic prophetic party a worse choice could not have been made. Not only was the new king lacking in sympathy with reform and in ability as a ruler, but he also soon showed himself a foe to the true prophets and a champion of the old, half-heathen party which had survived from the days of Manasseh, and which now was in the ascendency. He seems to have lacked completely all patriotic ambitions. Although he reigned at a time when Canaan was the coveted possession for which the Egyptians, led by Necho, and the Chaldeans, led by Nebuchadrezzar, were struggling, he made national interests entirely secondary to his personal greed and to his passion for splendid buildings. In vain Jeremiah exhorted him to rule righteously, that his family might enjoy the blessings promised them, and that the over-

whelming judgment, which Jehovah would otherwise visit upon Jerusalem and Judah, might be averted (21 : 11 to 22 : 9).

In chapter 22 : 13-19, the prophet presents an estimate of the young king's character, which is confirmed by other references : "Woe to that ruler who builds his palace with funds gained by unjust exactions and unfair decisions, who forces his subjects to toil for him, and pays them nothing ; whose dominant ambition is to rear a large and magnificent residence. Do you think, Jehoiakim, that it is essential that you as a king surpass all other potentates in the splendor of your palace ? Your father was deemed by all a successful king,—and why ? Because he was a just ruler, giving his first attention to those who needed his help. This is Jehovah's will. But you are intent only upon securing dishonest gains. You hesitate not at murder and cruel oppression.

"Therefore, this shall be your fate : your dead body shall be cast out like that of a beast. Neither your kindred nor your family shall mourn your death. No one shall be found to say a kind word concerning you, when you are dead."

Under such a ruler as Jehoiakim, Judah began to take that sudden and fatal plunge which ended in her ruin. It was an age when the most optimistic could do little but mourn. To the patriot and the enlightened

prophet, who was enabled to estimate the true trend of events, the folly and the crimes of the period appeared by contrast all the more lamentable because outlined against the almost ideal reign of Josiah. We have reason to believe that Jeremiah preached constantly throughout the reign of that noble prince ; but when he collected his earlier sermons, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, it was for the purpose of laying them before this king. Naturally, the addresses of denunciation and warning, such as would be best adapted to the moral needs of that depraved ruler, were selected. The result is, that we have little information respecting what must have been the brighter and more hopeful side of Jeremiah's character and work.

In the reign of Jehoiakim the circumstances were even more hopeless than when he entered upon his career of reform under Josiah. Now the people stood in the full light of the reformation, enforced by the teachings of the prophets. Their return to idolatry, therefore, was a deliberate turning of the back upon higher truth. In so doing, they showed their sodden contempt for the exhortation of the true prophets. Instead of enjoying the support of Josiah, Jeremiah was constantly the victim of the secret opposition or the open persecution of Jehoiakim. Most of all Jeremiah must have felt the lack of the companionship of that earnest body of true priests

and prophets whose place was filled for the most part by fawning tools of the king. These men, prophesying in the name of Jehovah, undermined the influence of the true ambassadors of the Highest, and ultimately wrecked their state. Earlier hatred of Jeremiah broke forth into personal persecutions. Fiercer denunciations and a more hopeless tone now characterize his prophecies. A deep despondency not infrequently seized him. Through those trying years, however, he continued fearlessly to proclaim the eternal truths which make his sermons messages for all times.

II

THE REACTION AGAINST THE PROPHETIC TEACHING

1. *Judah's Return to the Old Heathenism* (11 : 9-17)

Unpardonable sins (11 : 9-17).

Gradually the conviction forced itself upon me that the reformation of Josiah had not taken hold upon the hearts of the people. First in secret, now openly under Jehoiakim, they have revived the degenerate heathen customs and superstitions which the Book of Deuteronomy forbade. The old Canaanitish gods continue to command the homage of the Judeans, and of those who survived from ancient Israel. Thus they again are grievously transgressing the terms of the sacred covenant between their nation and Jehovah. Each city has its

patron god, while even in the streets of Jerusalem, under the shadow of Jehovah's temple, as in the days of Manasseh, altars are set up to Baal. Let them not think that they will escape Jehovah's judgment for this shameful treachery and apostasy, or that their idols will deliver them. It will be useless for the faithful prophet to intercede, since Jehovah will grant no mercy to such shameless offenders. Their presence and their offerings in the temple, instead of securing his favor, only pollute his sanctuary the more. The destruction of this once fair nation, from which Jehovah expected so much, has already begun, and its apostasy will bring it rapidly to completion.

2. *The Plot against Jeremiah at Anathoth* (11 : 18 to 12 : 6)

Treachery of Jeremiah's fellow-citizens (11 : 18-23).

Not suspecting treachery, I retired from the revolting sights of opposition, which confronted me in Jerusalem, to the quiet of Anathoth, my native town. Little did I dream that my friends would try to intimidate me into silence, and would even lay plans to drag me down to death. If Jehovah had not opened my eyes to the danger, like an innocent lamb I should have fallen a victim to their deceitful hate. Indignant at the outrage, I prayed: "O thou righteous Judge, punish the perpetrators of this crime." Soon the assurance came that an overwhelming judgment would ere long overtake them.

His complaint (12 : 1-4 ; cf. 17 : 14-18).

As I meditate upon these and similar wrongs, O righteous Lord, perplexing questions disturb me. How canst thou permit men to commit crimes like these with apparent impunity? Thou knowest how I have labored and suffered for thee. How long wilt thou grant prosperity to them, while I have only persecution? Let misfortune fall heavily upon those who deserve it so richly, and who defy thy divine authority.

Greater trials in store (12 : 5, 6).

To my cry of despondency, Jehovah replied: "If you are daunted and discouraged by the attack of your townsmen at home, how will you bear the assaults of the infuriated populace at Jerusalem, and the woes which will befall you as a prophet of truth when war relaxes all law and order? Still closer shall strike the blow. Your own kinsmen are plotting against you, and are trying to frighten you from the path of duty. Trust them not."

3. *A Temple Discourse—Condemnation of Judah* (7 : 1 to 8 : 3)

The scene (7 : 1, 2).

Early in the reign of Jehoiakim, Jehovah's spirit within led me, on a great feast day, to take my stand near one of the chief gates of the temple court, where the people were pouring in from all parts of the land of Judah, and in his name to deliver this message: "If your beloved state is to be preserved from destruction amidst the deadly perils which threaten on every side,

there must be a radical reform in your religious life. Deceive not yourselves by pointing to this temple, and by saying that it is the Lord's, and is therefore inviolable; think not that you can shield yourselves from disaster by ceremonial service. I will tell you plainly the form of service which alone is acceptable to me: in the courts impartially dispense justice toward the weak and defenseless in the community, be kindly considerate, hold human life sacred, and abstain from all idolatry. If you conform to these reasonable demands, then will I give to your state that immortality which you crave for it.

Not ceremonialism, but moral uprightness, will save (7 : 3-7).

"Alas! you are trusting to fatal fallacies. You sin against all the laws in the Decalogue, and persuade yourselves that you can then come up to this sanctuary with blood-stained offerings in your hands, and be absolved from all your crimes. Do you consider that my holy temple was designed to be an assembling place for highwaymen? Such, at least, you make it. Recall the complete destruction, at the hands of the hated Philistines, which overtook my ancient sanctuary at Shiloh, where, for so many years, my ark rested. That shrine was as sacred as is this one; but, because of the wickedness of your fathers, I caused it to be transformed into the ruin which you behold to-day. Even so, because of your crimes, will I level this temple to the earth. You

Their present course leads to destruction (7 : 8-15).

shall be carried away into captivity, as have been your northern brethren.

Intercession useless while they persist in their idolatry (7 : 16-20).

"Let no one intercede for this people, for it will be in vain. Men, women, and even the children, devote themselves zealously to the worship of other gods, as though their sole aim was to arouse my indignation. They have succeeded in so doing, and my consuming wrath shall be visited upon all which they hold dear.

Morality, not ceremonialism, enjoined by Jehovah (7 : 21-28).

"Continue to bring your sacrifices to the temple, if the practice gives you pleasure. Only do not deceive yourselves by thinking that it means anything to me. When I led your fathers forth from Egypt, I laid upon them no commands concerning offerings and sacrifices. My only injunction was that they conform in their lives to the standards of faith and practice which I had and which I should reveal to them. To make clear my will I have sent to them many and faithful prophets ; but they have paid no attention to my commands, and the later generations have been more defiant than the earlier. Therefore, expect not, O Jeremiah, that they will heed your words, for they have lost the power of appreciating truth."

The judgment (7 : 29–8 : 3).

Condemned are you as a nation, O Judeans. Tophet, down in the valley of Hinnom, where many a Jewish child has been burned to death by its parents as a victim to the loathsome heathen superstitions which you still cherish, shall be the scene of the great judgment.

"Valley of slaughter" shall it ever after be called, because there shall lie exposed the corpses of the thousands slain. The dead also shall share in the universal retribution, for their bones shall be dragged from their graves to moulder beneath the stars which they worshiped. The few who survive shall in their misery envy the dead their immunity from suffering.

4. *The Prophet's Impeachment and Trial* (26 : 7-24)

Effect of his temple discourse (26 : 7-9).

While Jeremiah was delivering this scathing sermon of denunciation, the wild rage of the crowds, which pressed close about him, was aroused. At the close, the people, led by the official priests and prophets present, laid hold on him, charging him with treason and blasphemy in prophesying that the temple and Jerusalem were destined to be laid in ruins.

The charge against the prophet and his defense (26 : 10-15).

Being informed of the popular demonstration against the prophet, the princes hastened from the palace to the temple, and took their seats by the entry of the new gate of the sanctuary for the purpose of hearing the case. The priests and prophets present forthwith demanded that Jeremiah be put to death, because he had dared to predict the destruction of their city. To the charge he replied: "I was divinely commissioned to prophesy as I have. Your duty it is to heed and obey, for then the doom which impends will be averted. To

that end has Jehovah sent me. I am in your power. Put me to death if you wish. Only remember, that in slaying a God-sent prophet, you will bring upon yourselves and upon your city a grievous burden of guilt."

Citation of precedents and acquittal of Jeremiah (26 : 16-24).

Influenced by the words and the calm demeanor of the prophet, the princes, seconded by the people, acknowledged the truth of his defense, and declared him unworthy of death. At this crisis also certain of the older and more experienced men recalled two well-known precedents: "In the days of Hezekiah, Micah, the Morashtite, in public predicted in equally unequivocal language the complete destruction of Jerusalem.[1] Instead of putting him to death for blasphemy, the king and the people of Judah listened to his warnings, and the judgment which he predicted was averted. If we put Jeremiah to death we would commit a heinous crime against our nation.

"You all shudder when we remind you of the fate of Uriah of Kirjath-jearim, who, a short time ago, uttered the same prophecy against this city and land. Prompted by a resentful spirit, Jehoiakim our king and his counsellors sought to put him to death. Hearing of it, Uriah fled to Egypt, but Jehoiakim brought him back and slew him, and cast his body into the potter's field. We have shed enough of the blood of the prophets."

[1] Micah 3 : 12.

By these arguments and through the powerful influence of his friend Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, Jeremiah was saved from death at the hands of the mob.

III

MESSAGES OF DENUNCIATION AND WARNING

1. *Indifference in the Face of Certain Judgment* (8 : 4 to 9 : 22)

When a man falls down, his first effort is to get on his feet again. This people are in the depths of moral degradation, and yet, instead of attempting to rise, they only endeavor to deceive themselves into believing that they have not fallen. No one of them thinks of repenting, and of admitting that he has broken God's laws. Instead, they pervert their divinely given instincts, and set up their own wisdom as final, while their scribes deliberately falsify the written law, so that it conceals rather than reveals Jehovah's will. Priest and prophet unite in so misleading the people that they are incapable of distinguishing between the words of the true and those of the false prophets. With their perverted law and messages, the leaders have lulled themselves as well as the nation into a fatal sense of security, so that they unblushingly commit the grossest crimes.

Moral insensibility of the nation (8 : 4-12).

Since there is no hope of reforming, Jehovah can do

A dread awakening awaits them (8 : 13-17).

nothing else than destroy these wicked servants, root and branch. When they hear the roar of the mighty foe advancing from the north, their false sense of security will be changed to terror and despair. Then Jehovah will spare not, but will complete the judgment.

Lament of the prophet over the fallen nation (8 : 18–9 : 6).

As I behold the dread fate awaiting my country, I am overwhelmed with sadness. I can picture the doubts and the remorse which will then take possession of all hearts. When it is too late, they will bitterly regret the supreme opportunities which they are now spurning. Is there no way of saving this nation at once from its sins before it is forever too late? Anguish inexpressible fills my heart because of the sickening tragedy which I am forced to witness. Gladly would I endure the privations of desert life, if I could escape the sight of the crimes which are daily enacted in every part of the land. When my countrymen open their mouths it is to utter lies; they are adept only in deceiving; their entire energy is devoted to doing iniquity, so that they find no time to think of God and of truth.

The impending doom a cause for general wailing (9 : 7-22).

Such shocking degeneracy can only be remedied by the most drastic measures. Jehovah will send invasion, drought, desolation, and exile to accomplish the work of purification. Soon these woes will descend upon your land, and then in the presence of disaster and death you will all join me in bitterest lamentation.

2. *The Proper Attitude in the Face of the Great Danger* (10 : 17-25)

Hold yourselves in readiness to leave, as captives, this city which you regard as impregnable. In imagination I can hear the piteous wails which you will utter when the calamity overtakes you, and the bitter reproaches you will heap upon your impious, incompetent rulers, because they have betrayed you. Already the dread news comes from the north that the foe is advancing, carrying desolation in his track. Prepare for exile (10 : 17-22).

In the presence of such a danger, let this be your prayer: "Thou, O Lord, art infinite, and we are helpless in thy hands. Discipline us as thou seest best, but restrain thy anger, lest we be completely consumed. Rather visit thy fury upon the heathen who defy thee, and seek to destroy us, thy people." Prayer in behalf of the people (10 : 23-25).

IV

THE APPROACH OF THE CHALDEANS UNDER NEBUCHADREZZAR

1. *Defeat of the Egyptians by Nebuchadrezzar at Carchemish in* 605 *B. C.* (46 : 2-12)

Marshal all your forces, O Necho; put them in battle array; bring your cavalry into line; complete the final arrangements; now for the onset. What! your army The first picture of the battle (46 : 3-6)

turns back! your mighty warriors flee! Terror seizes the Egyptian host. Vain are their efforts to escape; beside the Euphrates have they fallen.

The second picture of Egypt's overthrow (46 : 7-12).

Behold Necho's mighty army, rolling on like a swollen torrent, devastating everything which lies in its track. In his pride the Egyptian king expects to overrun the whole earth, destroying and conquering all the nations. Let the host advance—cavalry, chariots, bowmen, Ethiopians and warlike Lybians—to meet their fate, for this day Jehovah has determined to execute vengeance upon them for the many wrongs which they have perpetrated. Vain are your efforts, O Egyptians, to retrieve your fallen fortunes. Your prestige among the nations is gone. Before a mightier foe you shall bite the dust.

2. *The Divine Judgment upon the Nations Executed by Nebuchadrezzar* (25 ; cf. 47-49)

Occasion of the sermon (25 : 1, 2).

In the year 604 B. C., soon after the Chaldeans conquered the Egyptians at Carchemish, and Nebuchadrezzar ascended the throne of Babylon, Jeremiah delivered the following prophecy in the presence of the Judeans.

Judah's rejection of Jehovah's messages (25 : 3-7).

For twenty-three years I have faithfully and zealously delivered to you, O Judeans, the messages which Jehovah has given me. Other prophets have been equally true, but all our calls to repentance have been fruitless.

Therefore Jehovah has given to Nebuchadrezzar rule over powerful peoples, and has selected him as his servant to subjugate and to destroy you, O rebellious nation. He is "the foe from the north," of whom I so often warned you and your wicked neighbors. [For a limited period (seventy years) the Chaldeans shall exercise absolute sovereignty over Palestine. Then shall come their hour of retribution, and other world-powers shall absorb them.]

Nebuchadrezzar is Jehovah's servant appointed to execute his judgment (25 : 8-14).

Jehovah also commanded me, by giving the wine-cup of his fury in turn to the different nations of the earth, symbolically to indicate that the conquests of Nebuchadrezzar are to be universal, that they are in accordance with God's will, and that they are intended to punish the crimes of the victims. Rulers, as well as subjects, shall experience the horrors of this world-wide judgment, so long delayed and so terrible in its realization.

Extent and significance of Nebuchadrezzar's rule (25 : 15-38).

V

THE FIRST AND SECOND COLLECTIONS OF JEREMIAH'S PROPHECIES

1. *Origin and Fate of the First Edition* (36 : 1-26 ; 45)

In the memorable year 604 B. C., Jeremiah was commanded by God to write down on a roll of parchment all the prophecies against Israel and Judah and the foreign

The work of editing (36 : 1-4).

nations which he had delivered hitherto. The aim in so doing was that he might continue to teach, although it was no longer permitted or safe for him to preach in public ; and that perchance the people, in the face of the danger which threatened from the east, might yet be affected by the warnings which his sermons contained, and so seek that forgiveness which Jehovah was eager to grant, when once they repented. Accordingly, Jeremiah summoned his faithful scribe, Baruch, who wrote as the prophet dictated.

Public reading of the prophecies (36 : 5-8).

When the work was complete, Jeremiah, who could not go himself, commanded Baruch, in the hope of influencing the people, to read the roll in their presence as on a fast-day they were gathered from all parts of Judah at the temple.

Baruch's discouragement (45 : 1-5).

Baruch did as directed, but he, like his master in the beginning of his ministry, was overwhelmed with deep despondency, and complained that his life was bereft of all joy and peace, and that only sorrow and pain were his lot. To this wail Jeremiah replied in the name of Jehovah : "True, your lot is a sad one, but it is a time of universal judgment. Being a citizen of this guilty land, you must expect to suffer. Do not hope for prosperity, and you will not be disappointed. Jehovah, however, promises that, in the midst of all perils to which you will be exposed, your life shall be preserved."

The second public reading of Jeremiah's prophecies (36 : 9, 10).

In the spring of the following year, when the people of Judah were gathered together at the temple again to observe a solemn fast, that they might secure Jehovah's favor in the time of danger which followed the victory of Nebuchadrezzar at Carchemish, Baruch read from the collection of Jeremiah's prophecies.

Reading before the nobles and Jehoiakim (36 : 11-26).

A certain noble, Micaiah, the grandson of Josiah's famous chancellor, Shaphan, and the nephew of Ahikam, who earlier befriended Jeremiah when he was attacked by a mob (26 : 24), was impressed by the reading. Possibly feeling added responsibility because the reading took place in his room, he reported it at once to the other nobles who were assembled in the hall of the chancellor at the palace. They then summoned Baruch, and commanded him to read the roll again. The contents seemed so important that they decided to lay them before the king. When they were assured that there was no fraud, but that Baruch had written as Jeremiah had uttered the prophecies, they advised him and his master to conceal themselves where no one could find them. Then, leaving the roll in the room where they had heard it read, they reported its purport to Jehoiakim. He thereupon ordered it to be brought ; and it was read in his presence. As fast as it was read, however, he showed his contempt by cutting off the different sections of the roll with his knife, and by casting them into the

fire which burned on a brazier near by. Fear of the king restrained his nobles from expressing any horror at his impiety. Three of them, however, endeavored to dissuade him from destroying the roll, but in vain. He gave orders to seize Jeremiah and Baruch, but they were in concealment, so that his efforts to apprehend them were unsuccessful.

2. *The Second and Larger Edition* (36 : 27-32)

Prophecy against Jehoiakim (36 : 27-31).

Again the divine command came to Jeremiah to replace the roll of his prophecies, which had been burned by the king, and to add this new prophecy concerning Jehoiakim: "Since he has defied Jehovah in showing his contempt for the message of his prophet, he shall have no descendants to occupy the throne of Judah, while his corpse shall be denied an honorable burial. Upon him and upon his people will come all the woes which have been predicted."

The work of re-editing (36 : 32).

Comforted by the assurance of Jehovah's unfailing support, Jeremiah, with Baruch, his scribe, prepared a new edition of his prophecies, much fuller than the one which Jehoiakim destroyed.

VI

REITERATED MESSAGES OF WARNING AND EXHORTATION

1. *Dialogue between the Prophet and Jehovah* (14 ; 15)

A drought the occasion of the prophecy (14 : 2-6).

The people of Judah break forth into universal lamentation. Wails of anguish rise from every lip. The nobles, as well as the poor, suffer from thirst, for all the customary supplies of water are exhausted. So parched is the ground that the work of the husbandman is fruitless. The beasts of the field, overcome by hunger and consuming thirst, forget their natural instincts. All nature seems to gasp for breath.

Prophet's prayer for mercy and deliverance (14 : 7-9).

This calamity is deserved, O Lord. We cannot urge our deserts, but can only appeal to thy merciful character, as we cry to thee for deliverance. Many are our sins against thee, and thou alone art our Saviour in a time of distress like the present. Why art thou silent, O Jehovah, as one who is indifferent or powerless, while we are thus grievously affected? We know that thou art ever present. Sinful though we are, we are thy people. Save us, gracious Lord, for grim death stares us in the face, if thou avert not this terrible drought.

Jehovah's refusal (14 : 10-12).

Then answered the just Ruler of the universe: "Too long and too persistently have this people followed their own rebellious, base inclinations, to be lightly exculpated

from the effects of their crimes. Crave not pardon for them. Their fasting and offerings will not win my favor, for their deeds call for judgment. War, famine, and pestilence shall execute it."

Prophet's excuses (14 : 13).

Thy words, alas! are true, O Lord ; but consider how this people have been misled by the false prophets, who have declared in thy name that war and plagues would not, could not come, thus, by vain promises of peace, luring the ignorant masses on to their destruction.

Jehovah's reply: "Prophets and people must suffer" (14 : 14-17).

Again came Jehovah's response : "Without commission from me have the false prophets spoken. Deceptive is their message. By the sword and by famine, which they declare will never come, shall these traitors to God and the community die ; unburied shall their bodies lie beside those of their wives and children, the victims of their protector's perfidy. Well, O true prophet, do you weep day and night over the irremediable corruption which is destroying your nation."

Prophet's renewed petition (14 : 18-22).

In imagination I behold the carnage of war and the victims of famine ; but wilt thou, merciful Jehovah, give us over to complete destruction? In the name of my people, I beseech thee to consider how cruelly we have been deceived by our lying prophets. Miserable sinners though we are, in thy mercy reject us not. Although we have broken our part of the covenant with thee, for thine own honor among the nations redeem thy promises

to us thy people. Thou art the Creator and the Ruler of the universe. All things are possible with thee, and to thee we look for pardon and for deliverance.

Jehovah's reply: "No more mercy" (15 : 1-9, 12-14).

To my earnest cry Jehovah answered: "Though my holiest prophets of old were present to join their petitions with yours, it would be in vain. I cannot deliver this wicked, rebellious people. Already their judgment is decided. Death, war, famine, and captivity shall each claim their victim. The scars left on the character of the nation by the idolatrous practices introduced by Manasseh are too deep to be effaced. Fruitless have been the methods of discipline whereby I have sought to reclaim my people. Their stalwart husbands and sons have been mown down before the foreign conqueror, and yet those who survive have not profited by the warning. Therefore they must all share a like fate. Let them not delude themselves with the hope that the might of the irresistible Chaldeans can be broken.[1] I have already given my people over into the hand of their foes, whom they will serve in the land of captivity."

Prophet's personal complaint (15 : 10).

Alas that I was ever born! for it is my fate constantly to kindle opposition. I have wronged no man, and yet I am the object of universal hatred and attack.

Then to my heart came Jehovah's message of comfort:

[1] Verses 12 to 14 are here introduced immediately after verse 9. If they are from Jeremiah, this was probably their original position.

Jehovah's assurance (15 : 11).

"Be not discouraged, for I will uphold and vindicate you. The time will soon come when those who now attack you will eagerly solicit your intercessions."

Prophet's further complaint (15 : 15-18).

O Lord, thou knowest how I am wronged, and how doubts all but overcome me. Forget not thy servant, who for thee has suffered unjust calumnies. Take vengeance upon my persecutors. Gladly I received thy revelations, and consecrated myself to thy service. Recognizing the solemnity of the commission which thou gavest me, I have avoided all scenes of festivity. Thy message of judgment has completely filled my heart and dominated my life. Why hast thou not vindicated me? After all thy assurances, wilt thou leave me to be the object of my enemies' derision?

Jehovah's further assurance (15 : 19-21).

To my cry of despair Jehovah replied: "If you will dismiss your doubts and overcome your human weakness, you shall continue to be my ambassador, speaking to your nation with full authority from me. In time they will believe your words. Do not pervert the truth that you may thereby win popular favor. I will give you strength to endure all their hostile assaults, and I will deliver and gloriously vindicate you, if you prove faithful."

2. *Extracts from Prophecies Announcing Impending Judgment* (16 : 1 to 17 : 13)

Prophet's life a constant sermon (16 : 1-9).

Do you sometimes wonder, O Judeans, why, contrary to our customs, I live alone, without the consolations of wife and children? It is in accord with Jehovah's will, for any children whom I might beget would only grow up to experience the horrors of war, famine, and captivity, which shall overtake all the inhabitants of this accursed land. That I may still further impress by my daily life the message which is constantly on my lips, I never share in the universal custom of mourning with the friends of the dead, for it is unseemly that I, his prophet, should manifest a pity for you, his defiant, condemned people, which Jehovah himself does not feel. Soon a disaster shall overtake you that shall be so overpowering that, in your dumb anguish, no one shall think of lamentation or of consolation. In accordance with the same divine prompting, I never indulge in joyful merry-making, for it ill befits Jehovah's prophet to join with you as you dance on the edge of a chasm which will speedily engulf you, destroying all sources of mirth and rejoicing.

Causes of the coming calamity (16 : 10-13).

Anticipating your queries as to why Jehovah has determined thus to destroy you, he has commissioned me in his name to declare that it is because of your apostasy. Stubbornly you have refused to obey his law,

while with all your hearts you pay homage to gods other than the true one. Ample opportunity will be given you zealously to serve these heathen deities in the lands of exile. Expect, however, no mercy from Jehovah.

Exile inevitable (16 : 14-18).

[The future is not entirely hopeless, for, though exile is surely coming, he purposes ultimately to bring the scattered Israelites back to the land of Canaan, and, in so doing, to accomplish a work which will completely eclipse the famous deliverance from Egypt.]

Jehovah will, for the present, give up his people as a prey to pitiless foes, who will unsparingly wreak upon them the vengeance which they so richly merit. Many are the perils and pains of the present, yet thou, O Lord, dost deliver me, for I put my trust in thee. Even so, when their mistaken superstitions, inherited from the past, are dispelled, heathen peoples from distant parts of the earth shall turn unto thee with reverence and faith. At last the scales shall fall from their eyes, and they shall realize the folly of worshiping as deities creations of their hands. Then wilt thou reveal to them thy omnipotent power, and they shall appreciate thy true character.

All nations ultimately to recognize Jehovah (16 : 19-21).

The penalty of sin (17 : 1-4).

Alas! the crimes of the people of Judah have left an indelible impression upon the national character. All their inherited tendencies are toward idolatry. The Omnipotent himself is powerless to turn them from their

wicked course. He can only destroy. Hence he announces his determination to deliver his beloved city and people to the ravages and violence of the foreign conqueror.

The one source of escape (17 : 5-13).

If you would escape the impending calamity, give heed to the principles which regulate Jehovah's universe. Doomed to destruction is he who looks to finite man for defense, and who ignores the power divine. Barren and joyless shall be his life. But he who puts his confidence in God shall prosper, and be unaffected when danger and disaster approach. It is indeed strange that all do not perceive and profit by these truths ; but the natural tendencies of mankind are perverse. They may deceive each other, but not Jehovah, who sees everything in the human heart, and rewards accordingly. How vain and foolish, therefore, is the conduct of those who amass great fortunes by false means, thinking in their ignorance that they will profit thereby ! Thou, O Jehovah, art the true glory and hope of thy people. Disgrace and oblivion shall be the fate of all who forsake thee, the source of life, peace, and joy.

VII

ILLUSTRATED SERMONS

1. *The Lesson from the Potter* (18)

Jehovah's influence in human history (18 : 1-10).

Rejected by rulers and people, I was led, in my time of discouragement, to learn from the potter important lessons concerning the providential rule of the world. As I watched him shaping the pliant clay, remodeling the imperfect vessels until they conformed to his ideal, Jehovah revealed to me the manner in which he is able to mold at his will the nations. At the same time I realized that man may render God's work imperfect. The fulfilment of all predictions, either of good or of evil, are conditioned upon the conduct of those respecting whom they are made.

Judah's future hopeless, simply because she will not reform (18 : 11-17).

Therefore, O Judeans, learn and apply the practical lesson. Jehovah has announced that he will destroy your nation, but the desolation is conditioned on your continued sinning. Change those conditions by repenting, and, in accordance with his eternal purpose, you will yet be delivered. Alas! you are doomed, because you are so set in your evil ways that you make no effort to reform. Heathendom offers no such example of horrible apostasy as do his people. Contrary to all natural analogies, they have abandoned their traditions to adopt

gross superstitions. Therefore they give Jehovah no opportunity to show his mercy. Nothing remains but to give them over to that judgment which they have brought upon themselves.

Plots against the prophet (18 : 18).

Instead of being moved to repentance, the leaders of the people urged them to pay no attention to the unpleasant truths presented by Jeremiah, assuring them that many other priests, wise men, and prophets, would be left to give them religious instruction, if this troublesome prophet were put out of the way. They even took measures to accomplish this end by preferring false charges against him.

Prophet's prayer for vengeance (18 : 19-23).

Aroused beyond the point of human endurance by their machinations, Jeremiah prayed in his anger: "Thou seest, Lord, how these men have tried by base treachery to take my life. Thou knowest also how I have repeatedly interceded for them. I do so no more. Visit upon them all the horrors of war. Show no pity."

2. *Symbolic Declarations of Coming Ruin* (13 : 1-14)

Symbolism of the linen girdle (13 : 1-7).

At the instigation of Jehovah, I purchased a linen girdle, and wore it for a time about my waist, carefully preserving it from all contact with anything that might soil it. Then the divine command came to bury it beside the river Euphrates, and leave it there for a time. The result can be imagined. When I dug it up again,

the girdle, which I had cherished so carefully, was ruined, so that it was worthless.

Application to the Judeans (13 : 8-11).

This is the explanation of my strange proceeding. The linen girdle represents the people of Israel and Judah whom Jehovah chose and brought into a peculiarly intimate relationship with himself, protecting them from contact with whatever might defile, that they might worthily represent and glorify him. But they stubbornly refused to obey his commands, and paid their homage to other gods. Therefore, as my girdle was ruined by being buried beside the Euphrates, so shall they lose all their strength and beauty as a nation ; for Jehovah has determined to cast them aside, and to allow them to languish in captivity beside the same great river.

Symbolism of the filling of the wine-jars (13 : 12-14).

Jehovah further directed me to utter in the presence of the people the trite proverb, "Every jar shall be filled with wine." When they contemptuously retorted, "Of course it will," I added, giving a deeper meaning to the commonplace, "Jehovah will fill all the inhabtants of the land with the wine of his righteous judgment, so that kings, priests, and prophets shall reel like drunken men. None will he spare."

3. *The Lesson of the Broken Earthen Bottle* (19)

On another occasion, that I might impress my message upon unwilling hearers, I was divinely impelled to provide

myself with an earthen bottle, and to invite certain of the representatives of the people and of the priests to go down with me into the valley of Hinnom, beside the gate of the potsherds, and there to proclaim to them : "O leaders of Judah, Jehovah declares that because of the hideous heathen orgies which you and your fathers have practiced here at Tophet, in this valley of Hinnom, he will bring upon you a judgment far exceeding anything yet known to human experience. This scene of your crimes shall witness your punishment. You shall know the extreme horrors by plague and siege. Even as I break this earthen bottle into a thousand fragments, so will Jehovah shatter Jerusalem ; every place where heathen rites have been practiced shall become like Tophet here, defiled with all loathsome uncleanness." Returning, Jeremiah preached the same sermon in the temple court in the presence of the assembled people.

The complete ruin of the nation (19 : 1-15).

4. *Humiliation and Despondency of the Prophet* (20)

When Pashhur, the chief officer of the temple guard, heard Jeremiah uttering these prophecies, he beat him, and put him into stocks in the watch-room of the northern gate of the temple court, leaving him there until morning.

Imprisonment of Jeremiah (20 : 1, 2).

The next day, when released by Pashhur, the prophet, as did Amos at an earlier time in similar circumstances,

Sentence upon Pashhur and the nation (20 : 3-6).

directed against the official a prophecy applicable also to the nation of which he was a prominent representative: "The most appropriate name for you would be 'Terror on every side,' for you shall be encircled and overtaken by terrible perils. You shall see your friends die by the swords of the Chaldeans. Those of your nation who survive, together with the treasures of the city, shall be carried off as spoil to Babylon. You, who by your false predictions have misled the people, shall be among that unhappy band of captives who shall die and be buried in the land of your enforced exile."

Bitter complaint of the prophet (20 : 7-18).

Thou, O Jehovah, who art irresistible, didst persuade me to assume the duties of a prophet, in the fulfilling of which I am being subjected to ridicule and indignities. I have but one message, and that is, "Judgment and destruction are coming." No wonder that the people dislike the message and the messenger. And yet if I resolve to say nothing I am still more unhappy, for, whenever I behold their needs and mistakes, it is painful to refrain from declaring the truth which thou hast revealed to me concerning this erring people. Foes attack; perils thicken; trusted friends fail, and seek to betray me; yet, while I am often disheartened, I am never afraid, for thou, the Almighty, art defending me. My persecutors, I know, will ultimately be overtaken by disgrace and calamity; but I sometimes long, O thou

Vindicator of the righteous, to see that judgment speedily executed. As I think of my unhappy lot, I also often wish that I had never been born to such a life of sorrow, and I curse the day of my birth.

5. *The Lesson Drawn from the Fidelity of the Rechabites* (35)

An example of obedience (35 : 1-11).

During the latter days of Jehoiakim's reign, when the Aramean hordes set loose by Nebuchadrezzar had driven the wandering Rechabites from their haunts east of the Jordan to seek refuge within Jerusalem, I was impelled to conduct them into one of the rooms connected with the temple, and publicly to offer them wine to drink. As I had anticipated, they absolutely refused to partake, saying: "As a tribe we drink no wine, for so our honored ancestor Jonadab commanded us. Inspired by an intense antipathy for the corrupt and idolatrous agricultural civilization which flourished in Canaan, he further enjoined upon us not to build houses, nor till the soil, nor cultivate the vine, but to cherish the simple nomadic life and customs, that we might thus enjoy the blessing of long life. Those injunctions we have faithfully heeded, and we are now here in the city simply that we may escape the horrors of war."

Will you not, O Judeans, heed and profit by the example of the Rechabites? In accordance with the command

Judah stands in unfavorable contrast (35 : 12-19).

of their forefather, Jonadab, they regulate their entire life, conforming in every detail to the instructions laid down by him. You, however, have been instructed plainly and repeatedly respecting the commands of your God, and yet you have persistently disobeyed his will and paid homage to other deities. Will you not abandon your course of crime and apostasy, and, as penitents, return to him? But no; your faces and your acts do not reveal the least contrition. You give Jehovah no opportunity to avert the painful sentence which he has pronounced against you. When he longs to send blessings, your deeds and attitude compel him to destroy you. Since these barbarian Rechabites have obeyed the commands of their ancestor, their tribe shall continue to flourish long after your disobedient nation has gone down to ruin.

JEREMIAH'S ACTIVITY DURING THE REIGN OF ZEDEKIAH

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I

THE DOWNFALL OF JUDAH AND THE CLOSING YEARS OF JEREMIAH

Jehoiakim only lived to see the beginning of the calamities which resulted from his folly and selfish indifference. He died in 597, during the first siege of his capital by the Babylonians, leaving to his queen and young son Coniah, or Jeconiah, who assumed the name of Jehoiakin, a baneful heritage of war. Possibly the dirge preserved in 22 : 24-30 was uttered by Jeremiah in connection with the accession of the boy king. "Jehovah declares that, even though Coniah was his most cherished and valuable possession, he would deliver him into the power of the Babylonians. Both the king and the queen mother are condemned to die in exile. Worthless, as a ruler, is the son of Jehoiakim. Neither he nor his descendants shall sit again on the throne of Judah."

Three brief months, while Jerusalem held out against its besiegers, Jehoiakin reigned. Then he was dragged

to Babylon at the head of the prominent Jews, who constituted the first group of captives. Henceforth Jeremiah's interest was divided between his countrymen in Babylon and those remaining in Judah. Among the former were most of his friends and the best elements in the nation. Those who remained and directed the counsels of Zedekiah, the well-meaning but inefficient son of Josiah, whom the Babylonians appointed as a vassal king over the kingdom of his father, were as self-confident as they were ignorant of the art of statesmanship. In their sordid natures there was little respect for the messages of the true prophet. Besides, the circumstances of the period called forth a group of designing men, who counterfeited the formulas and style of the true prophets so perfectly that the unsuspecting masses were constantly misled by messages which purported to be divine. Whether these so-called "false" prophets were in every case pure impostors, or honest and merely self-deceived, cannot be determined. Their communications voiced so completely the hopes of the people that it is obvious why the masses accepted them, while they rejected the stern, unwelcome warnings of men like Jeremiah.

Hence the environment of the aged prophet was then even more unpleasant than during the reign of Jehoiakim. Zedekiah, it is true, retained a genuine respect

for him, but the character of the king was so weak and his power so slight that his secret regard bore little fruit. On the other hand, Jeremiah's influence with the Jews who remained in Judah was diminished ; he himself became the object of open and persistent persecutions. At first he succeeded in keeping the people from again rushing into foolish rebellion against Babylon. The empty promises, however, of Babylon's rival, Egypt, and the deceptive messages of the false prophets, at last, in 587 B. C., led the nation to take the fatal step.

Jeremiah, whose inspired insight enabled him to appreciate the absolute impossibility of Judah's coping successfully with the powerful armies of the great conqueror, Nebuchadrezzar, had but one message for king and people. "If you would save yourselves and nation, surrender at once." Naturally, he did not change this advice when Babylonian armies encircled Jerusalem and overran Judah. That he would thereby incur the charge of being without patriotism was inevitable. Tragic indeed is the picture of the aged prophet, branded as a traitor and subjected to shameful indignities at the hands of the nobles, simply because his loyalty to God and to his nation would not allow him to be silent. Through it all he wavered not, although it was a thankless return for his life of complete self-sacrifice. As the end of the state which he loved so in-

tensely drew near, an inspired hope concerning its future filled his soul, and found ever clearer and more frequent expression. If no prophet suffered more than he, certainly none saw farther into the very heart of the Eternal and recognized the character and loving purpose revealed there. Sitting among the ruins of Jerusalem, he proclaimed the new and universal kingdom of God which was to be established in the heart of the individual. Like all true prophets, he uttered his brightest predictions in the time of greatest national distress. Amidst the closing scenes he moved with the same simple grandeur. When the end came, and the king of Judah and his guilty advisers were carried off to Babylon, Jeremiah, who had constantly preached loyalty to Nebuchadrezzar, was allowed to remain behind with the few Jews who rallied at Mizpah about his friend, the faithful Gedaliah. For a brief time the little colony basked in the sunshine of a just rule. Jeremiah was the accepted pastor of the flock. Fugitives came streaming back, and prosperity promised again to abide with them, when suddenly all their peace was destroyed by the treacherous murder of Gedaliah and his supporters by the hand of certain renegade Jews. Despite the advice and exhortations of Jeremiah, the survivors of the massacre, fearing the wrath of the Babylonians, fled to Egypt. Thus it was that the closing days of the

prophet were spent among the refugees in Egypt. At the Jewish colony in Tahpanhes, on the borders of Palestine, he made his home.

Among his countrymen in the land of the Nile he found a needy, although very unpromising, field for his prophetic activity. Repeated national disasters had sadly shaken their faith in the God of Israel, while the polytheistic tendencies amidst which they now found themselves proved wellnigh irresistible. As a result, the masses went back to the worship of the ancient deities identified with the sun, and especially the moon, —"the queen of heaven." With all his early energy and courage, Jeremiah attacked the widespread apostasy. To impress upon the doubting Jews the fact that the national calamity which had overtaken them was in perfect accord with Jehovah's eternal purpose, he predicted that the Egyptians also would soon fall before God's messenger of judgment, Nebuchadrezzar.

Fearlessly he declared to those who had turned from Jehovah to the old heathen deities that they would be destroyed, and that only those who were faithful to their nation's God would again see the land of their nativity. A bitter defiance is reflected in their answer to the prophet, which suggests that the tradition that he met a martyr's death at their hands is not without foundation. Surely, having given to his nation and God his life work,

and all that the world counts dear, it was in a sense a fitting sequence that he should pour out his life's blood upon the same altar.

The conditions of his age were such that he lived almost constantly under the shadow of his nation's sins, and the calamities which followed in their train. At the same time he was a man "tempted in all points as we are." Through all his varied experiences his humanity found frequent expression. That element, so conspicuous in his character, only deepens our admiration and love for him. But his humanity never turned him from the path of duty. With that calm courage which comes not from earth, but from heaven, he heroically accepted every responsibility, however great. Little wonder that the Almighty confided to him the deepest spiritual truths vouchsafed to any man before the advent of the Son of man. By life as well as by word of mouth he proclaimed them. Oppressed, despised by his own, he "saw seed" in the generations which followed. Certainly no other prophet made such a deep impression upon later Judaism as did Jeremiah. He is one of the two or three inspired men who, perfected by suffering and by faithful service, stood on the threshold of the completed New Testament revelation.

II

SERMONS CONNECTED WITH THE FIRST CAPTIVITY

1. *Exhortations to Repent before it is forever too Late.* (13 : 15-27)

Seek Jehovah's help in this time of danger (13 : 15-17).

Give heed, O Judeans, and humble yourselves before the Lord. Pay homage to him, and secure his favor before he causes this black storm-cloud, which lowers over you, to break in all its fury. But no ; I can perceive from your actions that even now you will not bow your proud heads. Nothing remains for me to do but to mourn over the disaster, and the complete captivity toward which you, the chosen people of Jehovah, are hurrying.

Judah's humiliation (13 : 18-21).

Let the queen regent and the youthful king, Jehoiakin, descend from the tottering throne, for the crown is falling from their heads. Already the cities of Southern Judah are besieged by the foe, and there is no one to restore them. Already a large portion of the population is being carried away captive, and the rest will soon be compelled to follow. Behold, the long-heralded northern foe draws near to Jerusalem. Where are the powerful people entrusted to your care, O sacred city ? What will you think of your boasted alliances with heathen nations when you are subjected to their harsh rule ? Unutterable

woes shall soon overtake you. If you seek the cause of your disgraceful humiliation, you will find it in the black record of guilt with which your past is darkened.

Nothing but just retribution (13 : 23-27).

But it is useless to attempt to turn you, O Judeans, from your evil course, for your sinful habits have crystallized into character. It were easier for the negro to become white, or for a leopard to lose his spots. Hence, since you are incapable of repenting, eager to pardon and save you though he is, Jehovah can only punish your neglect and treachery toward him by laying bare before the world all your guilt and infidelity, and by scattering you as exiles among the nations.

2. *A Dirge over Fallen Judah* (12 : 7-13)

The rejected and afflicted nation (12 : 7-13).

Jehovah has handed over this nation, which he loves so deeply, and for which he has done so much, to be spoiled by cruel enemies. The continued defiance of his people has at last exhausted even the patience of the Infinite. Now foreign foes shall complete the devastation begun by the selfish, traitorous rulers of Judah, who have preyed upon rather than protected their charge. Already plundering foes, unconsciously carrying out the divine purpose, have laid waste the whole land, and granted no peace nor mercy to its inhabitants. In vain do you sow your grain, O Judeans, expecting to reap the

harvest ; for the hand, not only of man, but of God himself, is against you.

3. *Threats and Promises to the Heathen* (12 : 14-17)

Fate of the heathen conditioned upon their conduct (7 : 14-17).

To those heathen foes, who are attacking his people, Jehovah declares that he will cause them also to taste the horrors of exile. At length, however, he will be moved by that deep love and pity which he feels toward all mankind, and will restore them each to his native land. If they will seek to act in accordance with his will as revealed to his chosen people, and will manifest as much zeal in worshipping and serving him as they did in influencing the Hebrews to acknowledge fealty to Baal, then shall they share with his restored people in the permanent enjoyment of his blessings. If they do not heed his gracious offer, then complete national annihilation shall be their fate.

4. *Character and Future of the Jews in Judah and in Babylon* (24)

The two baskets of figs (24 : 1-3)

After the armies of Nebuchadrezzar had swept over Judah, leveling everything and carrying into captivity the youthful Jehoiakin, the nobles and the artisans, I beheld in a vision two baskets of figs. The one basket contained fresh, ripe, luscious figs ; the other, worthless figs, unfit to be eaten.

Interpretation of the vision (24 : 4-10),

With the vision came this message from Jehovah: "The basket of good figs represents the Jewish captives, whom I have sent to Babylon, that they, by hard experience, may learn valuable lessons. I will watch over them. Out of their present affliction shall come great good, for I purpose to restore them to this land, nevermore to be disturbed. At last, in sincerity, they shall turn to me as their God, and I will again recognize them as my chosen people. The hopelessly bad figs represent the princes and the people, who are left in Judah with Zedekiah, and those who have found refuge in Egypt. Like worthless flotsam and jetsam they shall be cast about upon the face of the earth, objects of scorn and reproach to its inhabitants. They shall be the victims of war, want, and pestilence, until these dread agents of destruction have completed their fatal work.

5. *A Letter to the Jewish Exiles in Babylon* (29)

Superscription (29 : 1-3).

This is the text of a letter from Jeremiah to the elders, priests, prophets, and people, held captive in Babylon, which was delivered by the hands of a messenger sent by Zedekiah to the Babylonian king:

Settle down for protracted residence in Babylon (29 : 4-9).

"It is Jehovah's will, O Jewish captives in Babylon, that you make permanent homes for yourselves in the land of your enforced sojourn. Cultivate the soil, build up your families and increase. Be loyal to the cities of

your adoption, for your prosperity is bound up with theirs. Be not deceived by your false prophets, when they declare in the name of Jehovah that you will speedily be allowed to return ; for their words are a delusion.

Promise of an ultimate return (29 : 10-14).

For two generations (seventy years) the Babylonians shall hold you in captivity. Then shall Jehovah lead you back to your native land, and realize both his loving purpose toward you and the fond hopes which you cherish. Above all, you shall then seek him contritely and faithfully, and he will not be found slow to respond.

Fate of those who remain in Judah (29 : 16-19).

Far preferable will be your lot to that of Zedekiah and the worthless crew who are left behind in Judah. Calamity after calamity shall overtake them, and they shall be the object of the scorn and attacks of the people among whom they will be scattered, for they turn a deaf ear to the earnest warnings of Jehovah's faithful messengers.

Judgment which is to overtake the false prophets in Babylon (29 : 15, 20-23).

Put no confidence in your lying prophets. Hear the divine sentence which will speedily be carried out against Ahab, the son of Kolaiah, and Zedekiah, the son of Maaseiah. The treason which they preach shall be reported to Nebuchadrezzar, and you shall be witnesses of their execution. Their crimes of deceit and adultery, and the judgment which overtook them, shall become a proverb among you.

Shemaiah the Nehelamite has written to the priest Zephaniah here in Jerusalem, declaring that the Lord has called him to the chief priesthood instead of Jehoiada, the present incumbent, and intimating that his first duty will be forcibly to silence the "mad prophets" who seek to dissuade the people from their hope of speedy deliverance from Babylon. Why did he not personally attack me, for I have urged you to settle in Babylon with a view to a continued residence there? This is Jehovah's declaration respecting that base, intriguing prophet: "He has no commission from me, and he is seeking to mislead you with his lying words. He is a traitor against me, and as a penalty neither he nor any of his descendants shall survive to enjoy the blessings which I have in store for my people."

III

DISPELLING FALSE HOPES OF SPEEDY DELIVERANCE FROM BABYLON'S RULE

1. *The Folly of Rebellion* (27 : 1-22)

Let the nations submit to Nebuchadrezzar (27 : 1-11).

Early during the reign of Zedekiah, in the year 595 B.C., when the states of Palestine were sending embassies to each other for the purpose of forming a coalition against Nebuchadrezzar, Jeremiah was inspired to make five yokes, and to give one to each of the foreign

messengers who came plotting rebellion. These they were to present to their masters the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon, with the following message from Jehovah: "I am the creator and supreme ruler of the earth. I give authority to whom I please. Nebuchadrezzar, the Babylonian king, is performing a service for me. To him and his family I have granted for a period supreme control over the people in this part of the earth. The nation which does not submit to his rule shall experience the miseries of war, famine, and pestilence. Therefore heed not the deceptive messages of your perverse religious leaders, for, if you listen to their encouragements to revolt against Babylon, they will betray you. Rebellion means certain exile. Continue to submit to Nebuchadrezzar, and you will be allowed undisturbed to enjoy your lands."

Let not Judah be beguiled into rebellion (27: 12-22).

Jeremiah gave the same warning to Zedekiah and the people of Judah: "Remain loyal to Babylon. It is suicide to rebel. Those prophets who encourage you to do so are deceivers, and speak without any commission from Jehovah. Their prediction that the vessels of the temple, which have been carried to Babylon, will soon be brought back is an idle dream. Even the few paltry ones which were left behind will before long be borne off to Babylon, where they shall remain until Jehovah sees fit to restore them."

2. *Contest between Jeremiah and Hananiah* (28)

Later, in the same critical year, Hananiah, a certain prophet from the town of Gibeon, publicly in the temple contradicted Jeremiah, declaring in the name of Jehovah of hosts, and using the characteristic formulas of the true prophets, that within two years Jehovah would bring back the vessels of the temple, together with Jehoiakin and the Jews carried to Babylon, and that he would break the power of Nebuchadrezzar. "Would that your prediction might be realized," was Jeremiah's rejoinder, "but remember, O Judeans, that many prophets in the past have uttered similar popular prophecies, which, alas, have proved false. The sole proof of the truth of a prediction is not whether its content is pleasing, but whether it is fulfilled."

Acted prophecies (28 : 10-17).

Stung by the implications contained in Jeremiah's reply, Hananiah tore off the yoke, which his opponent was wearing about his neck as a symbol of the captivity which he predicted, and broke it into pieces. Then turning to the people, Hananiah declared: "Even thus will Jehovah within two years break that rule which Nebuchadrezzar now exercises over the nations." Abashed by the boldness of his opponent, Jeremiah departed without replying. Soon, however, he returned with this new word from Jehovah: "True, O Hananiah.

you have broken the yoke of wood, but a yoke of iron shall take its place. Even so the nations may for a moment throw off the comparatively easy rule of Babylon, but the penalty of their rebellion shall be a much more grievous servitude. Since you, O prophet, have sought to betray this people by a false message, within a year shall you die the death of a traitor." In the seventh month of the same year the divine sentence was executed.

IV

CONDEMNATION OF JUDAH'S FALSE LEADERS

1. *The Base Rulers of the Present, and the Promised Messianic King of the Future* (23 ; 1-8 ; cf. 33 : 14-26)

An unenviable fate awaits you, O rulers of Judah, for, instead of faithfully guarding the interests of the people entrusted to your charge, you have preyed upon them. Their present disorganized condition is due to your incompetency and culpable misrule. Jehovah will hold you responsible for all these heinous wrongs which you have perpetrated.

Guilt and punishment of kings and nobles (23 : 1, 2).

The same God of justice declares that he will gather the faithful ones among his exiled people, and restore them to their land. There they shall again grow to be a great nation. Over them he will place rulers, who will considerately and wisely guide them, so that they shall

Ultimate restoration of the faithful, and appointment of just rulers (23 : 3-8 ; cf. 33 : 14-26).

never again experience the terrors of invasion or the pangs of famine. In the coming years, when Jehovah's purpose is fully realized, he will cause to arise from the princely house of David—which now, alas! is so degenerate—a king who shall have all the vigor of the original stock. In striking contrast to the character of the corrupt leaders who are now wrecking Judah, shall be that of the righteous ruler whom Jehovah will place over his people. His reign shall be marked by impartial justice and prudent action. Success shall crown all his efforts. Under his benign rule Israel and Judah, as of old, shall be united, and shall enjoy uninterrupted peace and prosperity. His name "Jehovah is our righteousness" shall be a pledge that Jehovah, who alone is able, has vindicated the righteousness of his people before the world.[1] For the day is coming when the deliverance from Egypt shall be completely eclipsed by the exodus from the lands of the captivity.

2. *False Prophets and False Prophecies* (23 : 9-40)

Corruption of the prophets and its effects (23 : 9-15).

When I meditate upon the ideal of righteousness which Jehovah has revealed to me, and upon the failure of this people to realize it, I am completely overcome. Prophet and priest have profaned their high calling.

[1] Note that in the parallel passage 33 : 16 the designation "Jehovah is our righteousness" is applied to Jerusalem.

The prophets of Jerusalem are even worse than those of Samaria who prophesied in the name of Baal ; for, while they pretend to be Jehovah's representatives, they do not hesitate to commit gross deeds of immorality. Instead of turning the people from their sins, they confirm them in their evil course by word and by example. The crimes of the men of Sodom and Gomorrah were not more hateful in the sight of Jehovah. Wretched indeed shall be the fate of these base prophets when Jehovah's certain judgment overtakes them.

Warnings against the false prophets (23 : 16-22).

Heed not their words, for, having no message from Jehovah, they speak only what conserves their own selfish interests. They are constantly predicting deliverance from the attacks of the Babylonians, and encouraging those who reject Jehovah's commands. Being hypocritical deceivers, they insinuate that all prophets are base like themselves. They have aroused Jehovah's hot indignation by their faithlessness and treachery.

Jehovah penetrates their deceptions (23 : 23-29).

They deceive men, but not the omniscient Ruler of the universe. He sees how they beguile the people by claiming to have had prophetic dreams. The true message from Jehovah, instead of easing the conscience, ever sets before the people a higher ideal of living, thereby laying bare, by contrast, their own imperfec-

tions. It is a flame which burns out the dross, rather than a veil which covers up their guilt.

Command not to use the prophetic expressions, perverted by misuse (23 : 30-40).

Jehovah disowns and denounces those impostors who, without any communication from him, take their cue from each other. By employing the familiar terminology of the prophets, they deceive the masses, and work incalculable harm to their nation. They have dragged the prophetic expression, "the burden of Jehovah," in the mire until it is unfit for use. If the people sincerely inquire, "What is the burden of Jehovah?" let them know that they themselves are a burden which God will no longer bear. A grievous judgment shall descend upon the prophet or priest who shall henceforth presume to preface his predictions by the old formula, "the burden of Jehovah." The simple message in itself is enough to commend it. In inquiring concerning the divine will, use some other simpler expression, like "What has the Lord answered?" or, "What has he said?" but woe to the individual or people who employs the worn-out, perverted term!

V

SERMONS AND EVENTS CONNECTED WITH THE FINAL SIEGE OF JERUSALEM

1. *Jeremiah's Message of Warning to Zedekiah* (21 : 1-10)

The occasion (21 : 1, 2).

During the earlier days of the final siege of Jerusalem, king Zedekiah sent two of the nobles, Pashhur, the son of Malchiah, and Zephaniah, the priest, to Jeremiah to inquire whether Jehovah would deliver the Judeans from Nebuchadrezzar, who was attacking them.

Jeremiah's reply: "No mercy, no hope of escape" (21 : 3-10).

To the king's question Jeremiah replied in the name of Jehovah : "In vain do you take up your weapons in order to defend yourself from the attack of the Babylonians. Prompted by righteous indignation, the Almighty himself will fight against you with his dread weapons of pestilence and famine. The king and those who survive he will deliver into the power of Nebuchadrezzar to be slain. The only way in which you can save your lives is by surrender to the foe before the end comes ; for Jehovah has determined to show you no mercy, but, instead, to hand you over to these, his agents of punishment."

2. *A Second Message of Warning* (34 : 1-7)

Future of Zedekiah and of his people (34 : 1-7).

A little later, while Nebuchadrezzar, with his armies, was laying siege to Jerusalem and the few cities of Judah which still held out against him, Jeremiah reiterated the divine declaration that for the Judeans there was no possibility of escape. Respecting Zedekiah, he added : "You shall go as a captive to Babylon, but your life shall be spared, and you shall die and be peacefully buried."

3. *Condemnation of the Perfidy Shown by the Judeans in the Treatment of their Slaves* (34 : 8-22)

The fact (34 : 8-11).

In a moment of contrition, aroused by the imminent danger which threatened from the swords of the besieging Babylonians, Zedekiah and his nobles made a solemn agreement before Jehovah that they would observe a neglected law, and set at liberty the Hebrew slaves in their possession. At first they carried out their obligations ; but later, when the danger was temporarily averted through the withdrawal of the besiegers, they broke their sacred promises, and forced their former slaves into the old state of illegal bondage.

The divine sentence upon the shameless princes (34 : 12-22).

When these facts were known, Jeremiah was inspired to declare in the name of Jehovah : "One of the elements in the holy covenant entered into by your forefathers, when I delivered them from the slavery of Egypt,

was that in the seventh year they would set free every Hebrew slave held by them. That agreement they failed to keep. Of your own free will you recognized the obligation, and made a solemn covenant with me, in fulfilment of which you for a brief period liberated your slaves. But, since you have not permanently set your brothers free, you shall yourselves be free to experience the bitter woes of war and captivity. Those grandees of Jerusalem and the common people, who have shamelessly broken that holy covenant with me, which they symbolized by passing between the severed parts of a calf sacrificed for the purpose, shall soon fall before their bloodthirsty foes, and their bodies shall lie unburied where they fall. Before many days the Babylonian army shall return to complete the conquest and destruction of Jerusalem and Judah. King and princes shall be taken captive, and this land of your nativity shall be left desolate and uninhabited."

4. *Faithful Prophesying in the Face of Persecution and Death* (37 ; 38 ; 39 : 15-18)

Conquest of Judah by the Babylonians inevitable (37 : 1-10).

During the latter part of the weak, godless reign of Zedekiah, at the time when the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians was temporarily relieved by the approach of an Egyptian army under Hophra, the Judean king sent two officers to Jeremiah to inquire what Jeho-

vah had in store for them. The prophet replied : "The Egyptians will secure for you only momentary deliverance. Soon they will retire, and the Babylonians will advance to conquer and destroy your city. Deceive not yourselves with false hopes. Even though you should defeat these foreign foes, they will nevertheless accomplish your ultimate destruction, because Jehovah has decreed it."

Arrest and confinement of Jeremiah (37 : 11-16).

During the same intermission of the siege, Jeremiah set out for his native town of Anathoth to take possession of some property which he had recently inherited. At the eastern gate of the city an official on guard arrested him on the charge of deserting to the Babylonians. Disregarding Jeremiah's denials, the officer brought him before the rulers of the city. They improved the opportunity to be revenged upon the plain-spoken prophet. After scourging him, they shut him up in the house of Jonathan the scribe, which had been converted into a temporary prison. There he remained for many days.

His partial release by Zedekiah (37 : 17-21).

At last, when the siege was renewed, Zedekiah inquired of the prophet, who had been conducted into his presence, whether there was any message from Jehovah. Unhesitatingly Jeremiah repeated his former declaration : "You shall surely be conquered by Nebuchadrezzar." Improving the opportunity, the aged patriot then demanded why it was that he had been im-

prisoned, while the deceitful prophets, who had betrayed the nation into its present plight, were allowed to go free. At Jeremiah's earnest solicitations, Zedekiah committed him to a more congenial place of confinement in the guard-house, and, while the supply lasted, gave him a daily allowance of bread.

Thrown as a traitor into a well to die (38 : 1-6).

During his period of confinement, Jeremiah did not cease to declare that to remain in Jerusalem meant a violent death, and that the only way to save one's life was to surrender to the Babylonian, since the ultimate fall of the city was inevitable.

Hearing of his advice, certain of the nobles, who were most hostile to him, demanded Jeremiah's death, urging that he was a traitor, and that his predictions weakened the courage of the soldiers and of the people. Zedekiah, confessing that he was powerless to oppose his imperious nobles, handed over his prisoner to them. They seized Jeremiah, and, without the semblance of a trial, let him down into a dry well in the court of the guard-house. There he was left in the mire to die.

Rescued at the instigation of an Ethiopian eunuch (38 : 7-13).

When a certain Ethiopian eunuch by the name of Ebed-melech learned what had been done to Jeremiah, he informed the king concerning the danger from starvation which threatened the intrepid prophet. At the command of Zedekiah, the Ethiopian, assisted by a small detachment of men, carefully drew up Jeremiah

from the well. Until the fall of the city, the prophet remained in the court of the guard-house.

Message of assurance for Ebed-melech (39 : 15-18).

While there he received a divine message for his brave deliverer, Ebed-melech, to the effect that, although the ruin of the city was imminent, he would be delivered from the foes whom he feared. Since he had proved true to Jehovah in serving his prophet, his own life would be preserved amidst the common dangers.

Jeremiah's final interview with Zedekiah (38 : 14-28).

In his perplexity Zedekiah again summoned Jeremiah into his presence. After the prophet had been assured that no harm would be done to him, whatever should be the nature of his reply, he declared that the one way in which the king could save his city and his own life was by surrendering to the Babylonians. Although recognizing the truth of Jeremiah's advice, the weak, selfish Zedekiah hesitated to accept it because, as he confessed, he feared the scorn of those of his subjects who had already deserted to the camp of Nebuchadrezzar. Assuring him that these fears were groundless, Jeremiah exhorted him to deliver himself and his wives and innocent children from the horrible calamity which otherwise awaited them. Zedekiah, however, was hopelessly dominated by his defiant princes. Instead of acting in accordance with Jeremiah's wise counsel, he made the prophet promise not to reveal to the nobles the nature of their interview. This promise Jeremiah

redeemed, and remained under the protection of the king until the final capture of Jerusalem.

VI

MESSAGES OF CONSOLATION

1. *An Earnest of Ultimate Restoration* (32)

Symbolic purchase of land (32 : 1-15).

During the final siege of Jerusalem, while Jeremiah was confined in the court of the guard-house, his cousin visited him, with the request that he purchase a certain part of the family estate at Anathoth. Recognizing in this demand a divinely given opportunity for impressing his prophetic message in the presence of many witnesses, he caused a formal bill of transfer to be drawn up, and paid the stipulated sum, although the land was already in the possession of the besieging Babylonians. Then he gave command to Baruch to store away the deed where it would be preserved for many years. "For," as he added, "Jehovah has revealed to me that land in Judah shall again possess a marketable value."

Prayer for further assurance (32 : 16-25).

After the transaction had been completed, Jeremiah prayed this prayer : "O Creator and Ruler of the universe, merciful and just, all-wise and all-powerful, faithfully didst thou lead thy people in the past. They, alas!

sinned so grievously against thee that their present woes are but their just deserts. What, therefore, O Lord, is the full significance of thy command to me to buy this land which already is in the hands of relentless foes?"

Jehovah's answer (32 : 26-44).

Then Jehovah strengthened Jeremiah's wavering faith, declaring: "Do you think, O prophet, that there is anything too difficult for me, the supreme ruler of mankind, to accomplish? True, I will give the city over to the Babylonians, and they shall completely destroy it as a just punishment for the apostasy and persistent idolatry of its inhabitants. I will not, however, forget my people, but will gather them from the lands of their captivity, and cause them peaceably to inhabit those very cities which are now being laid desolate. More than that, they shall then unite in giving me their sincere and reverential worship. Then also will I enter into a solemn covenant with them, promising to establish them permanently in the land, and to bestow upon them all the blessings which my loving heart suggests. Then, throughout all the territory of Judah, men shall again buy and sell the land now wasted by Babylonian armies, giving written contracts even as you have just done."

2. *The Bright Future beyond the Dark Present* (33 : 1-13)

Reiterated assurances of restoration (33 : 1-13).

On another occasion, while Jeremiah was still confined in the court of the guard-house, he received a second message of promise from Jehovah : "Useless are the frantic efforts of the men of Jerusalem to defend their tottering capital. Their bodies shall form a ghastly rampart about the doomed city. For a time I will give it up to judgment, but when war has done its purifying work I will rebuild and repeople it, and reveal to its inhabitants ideals of peace and righteousness undreamed of before. I will gather the scattered captives of Judah and Israel, and will establish them on their native soil, as in the days of the united kingdom. I will pardon the sin of the past, and remove its evil effects from their character. Then will my name be honored among all people, because they shall see the glorious restoration of this city and land which I shall have accomplished. Instead of the present wails of despair, songs of thanksgiving shall rise to me from the lips of the happy, contented people whom I shall bring back to inhabit Jerusalem and the now desolate towns of Judah."

3. *Glories of the Restoration Contrasted with the Present Humiliation* (30 : 1 to 31 : 28)

Prophecies to be fulfilled in the future (30 : 1-3).

During the closing years of Jeremiah's activity, after Jerusalem had been captured and destroyed, the divine command came to him to collect his various prophecies respecting the future of his nation and preserve them in written form ; for it was Jehovah's unchangeable purpose yet to bring back his exiled people to the land of their fathers.

Present terror to be succeeded by future peace (30 : 4-11).

These are the extracts from his sermons concerning Israel and Judah, which the prophet preserved : "True, terror now chills every heart. Fear blanches the faces of strong men. Never has the Jewish race experienced such calamities as at the present ; but it shall not last forever. Jehovah will break the galling yoke of the conqueror, and deliver his people from their painful servitude. In the coming days, again united under a king of the royal house of David, they shall serve Jehovah. Fear not, therefore, O chosen race, called to perform a service for your God, since you have his assurance that he will destroy the nations who now hold you as captives, and that he will surely preserve you, after completing the purifying and educating process to which you are now subjected.

"Piteous is your present condition, with no champion

to plead your cause, and no ally to help you. The disasters, however, which have fallen upon you, come at the command of Jehovah as a punishment for your persistence in sin. The tables shall soon be turned, and those who oppress you shall themselves feel the pains of conquest and captivity, while you shall be restored to Canaan. Out of its ruins another Jerusalem shall rise which shall equal the ancient city. Songs of thanksgiving and peals of laughter shall again be heard within these now ruined walls, while through its deserted streets shall surge a large and proud populace. The Hebrews will again be united under a ruler of their own race. Being chosen by Jehovah, he will know the divine will and worthily execute it. Then, O outcasts, you will be again in the old sense Jehovah's people.

Present wounds and anguish, future healing and joy (30 : 12-22).

"In that same glorious day you will at last appreciate the true significance of the present experiences and the principles which rule God's universe. Jehovah's judgment falls when it is deserved. Its aim is to discipline. When that end is accomplished, and not before, will your affliction cease.

The aim of the present judgment will be understood later (30 : 23, 24).

"In the coming years, when Jehovah's gracious purpose shall be realized, all surviving Israelites, united, shall again be known as his people. From the earliest days of their history, his love toward them has ever been strong and constant. As in those innocent days of

Restoration of the northern Israelites (31 : 1-9).

Israel's youth, he will again give her cause for merriment. On the long-deserted hills of Samaria, vineyards shall be planted. From hill to hill the watchmen shall send forth the cry, 'Let us go down to worship at Jehovah's sanctuary in Jerusalem!' He will gather his scattered people from far and near. No physical infirmity shall prevent them from coming at his call. A sad but hopeful throng will he lead back, making easy and attractive the way for their weary feet; for his love for his people is like that of a father for a child. In this universal restoration, the northern Israelites will not be overlooked, for Jehovah has not forgotten that in the earlier days they were the strongest and most prominent of the Hebrew race.

The restored and united Hebrew race shall again enjoy peace and plenty (31 : 10-14).

"Let the whole world know that he, like a shepherd, will assemble those whom he has scattered so widely. Slaves though they are, he will secure their liberation. Leaving their sorrows behind, they shall return to enjoy undisturbed the rich products of Canaan and the social and religious privileges which it affords.

Pardon for the repentant northern Israelites (31 : 15-22).

"Jehovah has heard the bitter cries of lamentation which have for nearly a century and a half gone up from faithful northern Israelites because the citizens of their once powerful nation are either dead or scattered to the four winds. At last let them be comforted and refrain from weeping, for their prayers shall be answered

in the return of the captives. Through all the long years, while they have felt themselves crushed under the ban of Jehovah's displeasure, he has been disciplining them. Now that they are truly repentant, the love and compassion which go out toward them from the heart of the Eternal will find expression in acts of restoration and blessing. The way is open for you to return, O exiles, if you will. Come back, wayward people, to your cities. Fear no more dangers, for under Jehovah's strong protecting care the men will be able to devote themselves undisturbed to their daily tasks, while the women will suffice to guard them from all attacks.

Conditions when the restoration shall be realized (31 : 23-28).

"When Jehovah has restored his people to the cities of Judah, as of old, they shall make pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the site of the temple of the God of justice and holiness. The hearts now hungering shall be satisfied with peace and plenty. As I came back to the dread present, my prophetic soul was enraptured by the visions of the blessings in store for my race. With them came the assurance from Jehovah that, as he up to the present had devoted himself to destroying and uprooting the two Hebrew kingdoms, so henceforth he would restore and guard them."

4. *The New Covenant between Jehovah and his People* (31 : 29-40)

Responsibility of the individual (31 : 29, 30).

In the new era, which is soon to dawn, the old fallacy that men are morally responsible for the sins of their ancestors, or for those of the community, will be disproved. No longer will the individual be able to avoid the consequences of his own crimes, but each shall be rewarded according to his acts.

The new covenant within the heart (31 : 31-34).

Jehovah will also establish a new covenant with his restored people. It shall not be an external compact between himself and the nation collectively, like that which was established when he led the Israelites forth from Egypt, and which they have broken, but a personal covenant between himself and the individual. Then the laws which formulate Jehovah's demands, to which the nations solemnly subscribe, shall be written, not upon stones, but indelibly impressed upon the minds of each faithful Israelite. Thus shall the close, confidential relationship between Jehovah and his people be re-established. Since the divine law will be impressed upon the mind of every one, it shall no longer be necessary to impart it by public and private instruction. All, the humblest as well as the noblest, shall know the will of the Lord, and shall be personally conscious of having received his full forgiveness.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

BOOKS OF REFERENCE

The extant literature for the study of the prophetic books is so numerous as to be confusing. The works which follow are mentioned for their helpfulness to the student who seeks to obtain a mastery of prophetic thought. Technical studies and works not translated into English are omitted.

For the history of the two centuries spanned by the contents of this volume the student may be referred to Professor C. F. Kent's "A History of the Hebrew People: The Divided Kingdom," 1897, (Scribner,) or to the still briefer sketch by Professor C. H. Cornill of Konigsberg, "History of the People of Israel," 1898. (Open Court Publishing Co.) A more elaborate work is Kittel's "History of the Hebrews," Vol. II, 1896. (Williams & Norgate.)

The father of the study of prophecy to-day was Professor W. Robertson Smith, whose articles on the prophetic books in the "Encyclopedia Britannica," and whose "Prophets of Israel," (D. Appleton & Co.), second edition, 1895, are almost as valuable as ever. For brief surveys of the Minor Prophets in turn, Farrar's "Minor Prophets," 1889, (Revell,) or Cornill's "Prophets of Israel," 1895, (Open Court Publishing Co.,) are acceptable, the former being more detailed than the latter. Kirkpatrick's "Doctrine of the Prophets," 1892, (Macmillan,) is of great value for its concise presentation of the characteristic teachings of each prophet. Without derogation to any

of these, however, it may be said that the two volumes by Professor George Adam Smith, entitled "The Book of the Twelve Prophets," 1896-98, (Armstrong, "The Expositor's Bible,") are the best aid to the interpretation of the Minor Prophets to be purchased in English. One may also mention the very valuable analyses in Driver's "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," sixth edition, 1897. (Scribner.)

For the study of Amos there are two excellent commentaries: one by Professor Driver, "Joel and Amos," 1897, (Macmillan,) the other by Professor Mitchell, "Amos: An Essay in Exegesis." For Hosea and Micah the most available commentaries are by Professor T. K. Cheyne in the Cambridge Bible series. For Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah an admirable commentary has been written for that same series by Professor A. B. Davidson. Among the countless aids for the study of Isaiah, one may mention the clever sketch by Driver in the Men of the Bible series, entitled "Isaiah, His Life and Times," 1888, (Revell,) the commentaries by Professor Skinner, "Isaiah, Chapters 1-39," 1896, (Macmillan,) and by Professor Mitchell, "Isaiah: A Study of Chapters 1-12," 1897, (Crowell,) and the expository, yet historical, treatment by Professor George Adam Smith, "The Book of Isaiah, 1-39," 1889. For Jeremiah, Professor Cheyne has written a spirited sketch, in the Men of the Bible series, entitled "Jeremiah, His Life and Times." A moderately good commentary is that by Rev. A. W. Streane in the Cambridge Bible series.

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